Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices

Testimony on SB608 to the Senate Housing Committee

February 1, 2019

Chair Fagan, Vice Chair Girod, Members of the Committee;

My name is Karen Nettler, I am board chair of the Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices (OCCV), a faith-based organization advocating for laws that fulfill the scriptural mandate for government structures fostering the well-being of all, and particularly those most at risk. OCCV is a member of the Oregon Housing Coalition and joins them in support of SB608.

As people of faith we take a lead from scripture about what our society's priorities should be. We note that Jesus focused on the most basic human needs, the need for food, water, clothing, shelter, when he spoke of how we should care for each other. Safe and stable housing is a fundamental need, without which the health safety and security of families is profoundly at risk. And, a society that allows a lack of affordable housing is a society at risk. It is asking too much to expect our neighbors to function well at work, at school, in our communities, when they are suffering the trauma of not having stable, safe housing.

What programs and policies we choose to fund through our laws reflects our priorities. It is both a moral imperative and a matter of common sense that stable housing should be one of our highest priorities.   While SB608 will help all renters, it gives the legislature the opportunity to especially come alongside those already struggling to make ends meet, the elderly and disabled on fixed incomes, families in low wage jobs struggling to pay their bills.

We urge this committee to vote yes in support of HB608, believing that its provisions reflect our faith values, and our moral commitment as a society to assure the basic protection of a secure and safe place to call home.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and for the work and service you give on behalf of all of us.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Nettler, OCCV board chair
11816 SE Solomon Court
Happy Valley 97086