

I am writing to OPPOSE HB 2001. I understand the desire to create more affordable housing, but there has to be some room for balance in this discussion. There are some historic neighborhoods in Portland and other parts of the state where it is desirable to maintain single family homes. This is what gives the neighborhoods of so many cities livability and charm. Once historic neighborhoods of single family homes are changed by inclusion of duplexes, etc, those changes are for good. Cities should have smart balanced planning for growth with input from neighborhoods as to how they want to see their future. The state should not be mandating a one size fits all for its cities and communities.

For example, Laurelhurst neighborhood in Portland has overwhelmingly chosen to designate itself as a historic neighborhood to preserve its history and charm. The rationale is not to be snobbish or keep lower income individuals out, but to maintain the historic character of the parts of the city that make it so beautiful.. Why should the state be able to dictate to the vast majority of those residents that their opinions and rights don't matter? If this bill passes, most of the homes will be protected by the historic designation, but 25% of the homes will not be protected because of the new law. Some homes could be demolished under the new law, but the amount of homes changed to duplexes and triplexes would have a negligible effect on the affordability of the Portland housing market. So the character of Laurelhurst neighborhood would be changed forever but with no real impact on the stated goals of the authors of this bill.

Please reject this bill and consider smarter ways to plan for growth for our communities.

Sincerely,

James Grant
Portland