

ESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2285

House Committee on Judiciary

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Chair Williamson, Vice-chairs Sprenger and Gorsek, and Committee members: I write in support of HB 2285.

I have spent much of my work career, over the past 30 years, advocating at the state and local levels for affordable housing.

You all know about our current housing crisis. Addressing this crisis will require that we do many things, some big, some small. This bill addresses one of those things, perhaps small, but still of value, practically and symbolically.

Last fall I met with Habitat's Shannon Vilhauer, the lobbyist for the City of Medford, and State Rep. Pam Marsh to talk about whether the city could use current state laws to transfer ownership of abandoned homes to nonprofits such as Habitat which are dedicated to increasing the supply of affordable homeownership options. We concluded that the current laws were not workable. Thus this bill.

There is also a symbolic benefit from this bill. I can't tell you the number of times, in my work, that I've heard people complain about abandoned, unused homes. Besides providing another option for affordable homeownership and cleaning up an abandoned home that is an eyesore for the neighbors, putting these zombie homes to a good use helps citizens see that we can do something positive about our housing crisis.

I believe that this bill will make a difference. Please support it.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify.