



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

March 26, 2019

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
Co-Chair Senator Manning and Co-Chair Representative Gomberg and members of the  
Committee

Re: **SB 5512** – Oregon Housing and Community Services Budget – **Support**

Oregon's severe lack of affordable housing is causing housing instability and homelessness in every corner of our state. Although, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) has increased its investments in affordable housing for low- and very low-income residents since the Great Recession, it's not enough to address the overwhelming need.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports providing additional resources to prevent or end homelessness, through investments in the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program, delivered effectively through a network of Community Action Agencies.

The League supports investing in programs to reduce child and family homelessness, Energy and Weatherization programs and access to Foreclosure Counseling. These services have been critical to the wellbeing of our state's very lowest income residents. Also, the state oversees the Individual Development Account, a matched savings account for low-income residents.

The League supports the preservation and creation of housing opportunities for lower income Oregonians who need a place to call home. Additional resources are needed to maintain affordable housing. Also, increases to OHCS's Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Housing Program will help build more affordable housing units for low-income households, especially families.

The agency is working hard to develop and acquire affordable multifamily rental housing and preserve existing affordable rental housing. OHCS successfully partners with lenders and homeownership centers throughout Oregon to support low- and moderate-income families in becoming and remaining homeowners. These increases in several key OHCS programs will result in the need to manage additional levels of activity and recruit additional staff.

The League strongly supports HB 3349 to remove the state mortgage income deduction from the top 5% percent of Oregon households with incomes over \$250,000. By modifying the deduction, resources can be redirected to support families experiencing homelessness, housing instability and affordable homeownership for low- and moderate-income households. Directing the \$150 million in anticipated savings through the reform of the mortgage income deduction to lower-income families is an effective way to address our state's housing crisis.

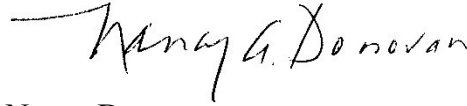
Homelessness and the overwhelming shortage of housing affordable to extremely low-income

households are of paramount concern to the League. We encourage the Legislature to continue to fund, and in many cases, increase funding for these critical programs to help individuals and families, gain access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Norman Turrill  
LWVOR President



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LWVOR Housing Policy Portfolio