

Testimony OHCS Budget HB 5005 April 12, 2019

Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Submitted by John Mullin on behalf of AARP

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AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With 510,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability, and personal fulfillment. An important aspect of our work is advocating for livable and age-friendly communities, including expanding housing options, and ensuring access to affordable, safe, secure, and accessible homes for all Oregonians.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to support the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) budget (AARP 3-25-19 testimony on SB 5512), and now to support HB 5005 for the critically important and related bonding requests. The budget approval, along with the bonding allocations, will provide the kind of investments necessary to provide the range of housing and service resources needed for struggling Oregon households. AARP Oregon has supported tenant protections, missing middle housing, affordable housing and more this session, and we are committed, along with other advocacy groups, in supporting these coordinated efforts.

Affordable and accessible housing is fundamental to quality of life for people of all ages and abilities, family compositions, incomes and backgrounds. However, the reality of a safe, secure, and comfortable home for many families in our communities is in jeopardy due the unprecedented housing crisis in our state. It certainly is so for many older Oregonians - from metro areas to rural communities.

Through our work with the Housing Alliance, we have previously commented on housing preservation in our testimony on the OHCS budget. **AARP also supports General Obligation Bonds to be issued for expanding affordable housing stock through new construction of affordable units, as well as home ownership opportunities. We support \$200 million for the LIFT program.**

As the older adult population is projected to grow, it is anticipated that the number of low-income older adults will also grow. In addition, we know that the incidence of housing cost burdens rises with age as incomes fall. We need your leadership to meet our state's pressing housing needs and to create opportunity for all Oregonians through stable, safe, and affordable housing.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to make our state an age-friendly and livable place for people of all ages and abilities.