



Multnomah
County

JOINT OFFICE OF HOMELESS SERVICES

April 22, 2019

Senator Shamia Fagan, Chair
Senator Dallas Heard, Vice-Chair
Housing Committee
Oregon State Senate

RE: Support for HB 2916

Dear Chair Fagan and Vice Chair Heard:

The Joint Office of Homeless Services for Multnomah County and the City of Portland (JOHS) encourages your support for HB 2916. The JOHS oversees the development and implementation of the publicly funded emergency shelter system in Multnomah County.

As we have expanded shelter capacity in response to the homelessness crisis in our community, we have recognized the need to diversify the types of shelter options available. The "transitional housing" authorized by HB 2916 is one critical form of temporary shelter that provides basic safety off the streets while at the same time offering an important location for people to engage in the services needed to transition back into permanent housing.

Portland has had an example of this type of transitional community for more than 15 years, Dignity Village. By partnering with other non-profit partners, Dignity Village has provided critical shelter and support to individuals who are not well suited to traditional facility-based shelters, while also helping those individuals make successful transitions out of homelessness.

HB 2916 will provide important authority for local jurisdictions to expand this type of transitional housing intervention, to use the most appropriate available temporary sleeping accommodations given the intended programming, and, through the Oregon Health Authority, to ensure that critical life, health, and safety standards are met.

With many thousands of Oregonians living without even the most basic safety of sheltered every night, we must find innovative and cost-effective ways to expand shelter options while we continue our commitment to ensuring that every person in our state has access to quality affordable housing.

Sincerely,

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