



Your Life. Your Voice.

February 4, 2020

To: House Human Services and Housing Committee

From: Gabrielle Guedon, Executive Director, Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition

RE: Support for HB 4002 Long Term Rent Assistance Study

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Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition (OSAC) is a statewide nonprofit organization made up of people experiencing intellectual or developmental disabilities. We also have 18 local self-advocacy member groups in communities around Oregon. We support people to advocate in all aspects of their lives. Housing is important to us because it helps us be members of our community and have a safe place to call our own.

Communities are stronger when all people participate. All people have gifts and weaknesses that mix together in a community to make everyone stronger. People with disabilities are just like everyone else, they just may need different supports. It is important to have a community with people of different interests because we all lead our best lives together in community.

When people with disabilities find a home that works for them, we are more successful. Our support stabilizes when our home stabilizes. This allows us to find jobs and connect with our communities.

We support SB 4002 because it provides the opportunity to build stability and choice in people's lives by conducting long term rent assistance feasibility study. Long-term rent assistance is an effective strategy to prevent homelessness and provide an opportunity for people with low incomes to access stability.

Long term rent assistance supports people to have a home. To us, home means:

- The good feeling you get when you are stable and supported to try new and different things
- Independence: a place where you can live the way you want and do the things you want
- Survival: a place where you can have the things you need to feel safe
- Security: when I leave for the day, my things will be where I left them when I return.
- I can be me: a place where I can be myself



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Without options for places to live, we have intense fear about what happens to our lives. When communities all around us are experiencing rent increases, we feel left out of our communities because we can't afford to live there.

Long-term rent assistance can help us find and keep housing in our communities. We are excited to partner with Oregon Housing and Community Services and support the long-term rent assistance study.