

March 9, 2021

Oregon House Committee on Housing
Rep. Julie Fahey, Chair
900 NE Court St.
Salem, OR 97301

Representative Fahey and members of the Committee:

Today, we write to you as the operators of the Newberg Emergency Shelter in Yamhill County. We are the first ever, year-round low barrier shelter in Yamhill County.

We are concerned about the drastic funding changes proposed in HB2100, as they will undercut the ground-breaking collaborative work happening in Newberg around the needs of our houseless neighbors.

We are not a 501c3 yet but have been operating at a local church for inclement weather sheltering each winter on a volunteer basis and community involvement. Yet, *we know our neighbors by name*, we see their *pain and struggles of being unhoused* beyond inclement weather, and are *well prepared to be part of changing lives* in meaningful ways.

We have been open now two months in our expanded operations. We have new guests seeking help, that have never before. They are sleeping. They are eating. Their mental health is improved. We now have access to showers and laundry. We have a stable space to bring local health partners in to bring in access to health care. And so much more.

We could not have gotten here alone, in the timing we have. We are open *TODAY*, not in 5 years because of the following intentional partners:

- ***Yamhill Community Action Partnership***, our local community action agency has made our year-round and expanded operations possible. They have provided a property at no cost, are covering utilities and maintenance, passing through funds for full time staffing support, and sharing shelter resources around data collection, shelter safety and best practices.
- ***Community Wellness Collective***, bringing in their wide-reaching support as a Newberg based 501c3, operational liability and strong connections to other community-based resources.
- ***City of Newberg, Mayor Rogers and City Council***, being a strategic partner to discuss city wide impact, gap needs that might be funded and building additional community/volunteer networks.

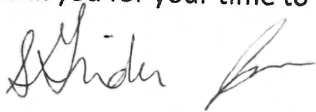
Making the jump to year-round and opening more beds for our neighbors to access night by night seemed impossible. With the work of this full group, *it became possible*. All have stepped in as

advocates for our needs now and strategic partners for future capacity building of this shelter. It is a gift.

Fact - with the funding cuts proposed in HB2100 to the community action agencies, this local partnership and building shelter capacity that is reflective of the Yamhill County specific needs around homelessness ***will completely disappear.***

Do not remove this critical work from our community. It is working. It is desperately needed. It is what is essential to taking care of our unhoused neighbors, TODAY and not years down the road. Our guests are real people and their lives are of value in this moment.

Thank you for your time to listen to our concerns. We urge you to not move HB2100 forward.



Sarah Grider and Kara Davidhi
Co-Operators
Newberg Emergency Shelter



Elise Yarnell-Hollamon and Kristen Stoller
Co-Founder
Community Wellness Collective



Mayor Rick Rogers
City of Newberg

