

Dear committee members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony on HB5100. We already have so many unhoused on the streets of Portland, and have the dubious distinction of being number one state for most homeless children.

With the rent moratorium coming to an end soon, the outlook will be dim unless there is a serious and immediate movement for more available, low-income housing.

My history is one of raising two generations of kids, and working fifty plus hours a week as a counselor. But a bit more than ten years ago, I hit a snag in my emotional/mental health, which culminated in a slide into living on the street. The experience is so surreal, but the things that were most traumatic were finding a safe place to sleep, bathrooms, and keeping clean. And not having a place to store what little belongings you may have left sets you up for being targeted by police and others as an undesirable. Just being able to sit at a bus stop or park bench becomes an issue. You feel that you are on a conveyor belt, always having to move, never being able to light somewhere and rest.

My life is proof that people can change their circumstances and live a full life, paying the grace and generosity forward. JOIN helped me into housing, and provided wrap around services for two years while I found my foundation again. I'm a peer support specialist and housing advocate for several organizations, including board member and advocacy committee for REACH.

Our city, nee state, is going to be in complete chaos if housing support such as HB 5100 does not come through. I recently read in Forbes that Portland is a dying city. As a native who loves my city, I pray that we can turn this around...for many years, we were voted most livable city, for music, arts, great restaurants, proximity to ocean, mountains, and desert. I believe that we can, but it's going to take dedication of funding to accomplish that.

Thank you so much for hearing what I have to say regarding HB 5100, for your time, and for fighting alongside of us for a better Oregon.