

Dear Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner-Hayward, Co-Chair Rayfield, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Devine, and I live and work in Corvallis. I am writing to urge you to pass a budget that invests in and prioritizes safe, stable, and affordable housing for all Oregonians.

As a social worker supporting families experiencing poverty and housing instability, I talk every day with people who are struggling to pay their rent; find safe and affordable housing; put food on the table and keep the lights on; and attend to other basic needs for themselves and their children. Since the pandemic started, I have seen that financial instability has worsened significantly, and many formerly middle class families, as well as those who were already struggling, are finding themselves facing homelessness. People have lost their jobs and sometimes their loved ones, and are forced to make tough choices to survive, frequently getting into deeper and deeper debt and still not making ends meet. The magnitude of the physical and emotional toll this hardship is taking on individuals and families is difficult to describe.

Every Oregonian deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home, and no one should lose their housing in the middle of a global pandemic. I'm writing to ask you to invest in housing support by providing funding for emergency shelters, emergency rent assistance, housing options for unaccompanied homeless youth, and affordable long-term housing.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Sarah Devine, MSW