



May 13, 2021

Chair Burdick, Vice-Chair Boquist, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Britt Conroy, and I am Public Policy Director at Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. EMO supports SB 852 because, true to our calling to care for one another, the bill prioritizes housing for those experiencing homelessness, survivors of domestic violence and marginalized Oregonians over a mortgage interest tax break for Oregon's most fortunate, highest-income households who are themselves stably housed.

According to one source, no other state has a rate of K-12 homelessness as high as Oregon.ⁱ

The sheer numbers of this crisis are staggering. Over 22,000 Oregon K-12 students experienced homelessness during the 2018-2019 school year, impacting families in every corner of the state:

- In Malheur County, 276 K-12 students experienced homelessness that school year;
- In Polk County: 370 students experienced homelessness;
- Yamhill County: 647 students;
- Clackamas County: 1055 students;
- Washington County: 2853 students; and
- In Multnomah County, 3310 K-12 students experienced homelessness.ⁱⁱ

SB 852 would not just help our state support houseless students, it would also enable Oregon to better support women and families in desperate need of housing. We see the link between domestic violence, homelessness and, as we are talking about today, skewed state housing funding priorities play out right here in Oregon. According to Governor Brown's Housing Agenda, 8300 requests for emergency shelter in 2017 could not be met because Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault shelters were full. A chilling 8300 times. That means that on average, we turn our back on 23 survivors and their children day in and day out in this state.ⁱⁱⁱ

Finally, SB 852 would make investments to address Oregon's legacy of racial discrimination and racial disparities in home ownership. Investments that are long overdue.

SB 852 would enable Oregon to stand with youth, with families and with BIPOC community members. We urge your support for this legislation.

Thank you.

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ⁱ Achen, Paris. "Oregon Ranks First for Homeless Youth," *East Oregonian*. August 8, 2018. Available at: https://www.eastoregonian.com/news/local/oregon-ranks-first-for-homeless-youth/article_71a7f120-6139-526c-8c02-8040d6bc0b66.html

ⁱⁱ Oregon Department of Education, <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/ESEA/McKinney-Vento/Documents/K-12%20Totals%20by%20District%20and%20Living%20Situation%2018-19.xlsx>

ⁱⁱⁱ "Housing Policy Agenda." August 30, 2018. Available at <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/documents/housing%20agenda%20final.pdf>