



LatinoNetwork

**Testimony of Leland Baxter-Neal, Director of Advocacy
Regarding HB 2842
House Committee on Housing, February 11, 2021**

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the House Housing Committee,

Latino Network appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2842. **Latino Network strongly supports HB 2842 to create a Healthy Homes program.** As members of the Fair Shot For All Coalition we support this policy as part of the 2021 legislative agenda and the ongoing work for environmental justice in Oregon.

Latino Network is a culturally-specific nonprofit serving Latinx youth and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Our organization provides transformative services to over 8,000 Latinx youth, families, and community members in multiple areas including education, family stability, housing support, and advocacy.

The Latinx community in Oregon faces inequities in health and housing. As the dual crises of the pandemic and wildfire smoke have pushed Oregon families to spend more and more time indoors, the impacts of an unhealthy home only compound. Families with low-incomes, families living in rural and tribal communities, and individuals that identify as Black, Indigneous, Latinx, or people of color are the most impacted due to decades of redlining and other discriminatory practices.

Consequently, our communities are more likely to experience sick days and hospital visits caused by mold, cold weather, asthma flare-ups, and the inability to take refuge from bad outdoor air quality. In 2017, Oregonians spent \$28 million on asthma-related hospital visits. Thirty-two percent of children live in energy burdened homes and asthma is the leading cause of missed school days. Fifty-four percent of Oregonians live in housing built before 1978 that is energy-inefficient and in need of repairs, weatherproofing, and upgrades.

Our housing quality problem is harming everyday people who are already hurting, and putting a burden on our healthcare system. This is exacerbated by—and more dangerous during—a respiratory pandemic.

HB 2842 creates a Healthy Homes program at the Oregon Healthy Authority to provide grants to eligible entities that provide financial assistance to persons in low income households to repair and rehabilitate their residences and to landlords to repair and rehabilitate dwelling units.

Creating and funding a Healthy Homes program creates more equity for our communities and makes good fiscal sense for our state. HB 2842 will: 1) help low-income families spend less money on heating and cooling; 2) create good local jobs in retrofitting and repairs; 3) provide a refuge from increasingly bad outdoor air quality; 4) reduce burden on hospitals and families by supporting better respiratory health; and 5) reduce the number of sick days for both adults and kids.

Please vote yes on HB 2842 to help build an Oregon where everyone lives in a home that is healthy and safe.