

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2336

February 18, 2021

House Committee on Housing

John D. Curtis

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Good afternoon Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Campos and Morgan, and members of the committee. My name is John Curtis. I am a severely disabled senior living in southern Oregon. I have been confined to a wheelchair for almost 52 years.

HB 2336 allows jurisdictions to offer builders suggestions on how to construct accessible single family units. Unlike Type A & B units, Type Cs are envisioned to be friendly to all future residents, regardless of their physical accommodation needs. A young family could age in such a unit knowing that they or their visitors can easily access bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens. Creating an appendix for builders to construct such units can only help to remove one obstacle, the lack of knowledge on how easily Type Cs are made.

The sad reality is that housing supply generally is at a historic low and demand is ever increasing. Accessible units are especially scarce. Seniors and people with disabilities are at an extreme disadvantage when looking for a unit they can safely live in. This is especially sad because an accessible unit is no more costly and far more valuable to build than other units.

In my years, all but one of the dwellings I lived in were challenging for me and my caregivers. Too often I could not enter the front door because it was so far above ground level. A temporary ramp had to be made. Living rooms have been my bedroom because they were the only one with a door (front) wide enough for me to enter. Hallways were too narrow for my wheelchair. I could not get into or turn around in bathrooms. My family and caregivers had to physically carry me into them to toilet or bathe. Often removal of doors was necessary to get in and out of rooms. Kitchens were too tiny. Needless to say, I very seldom visited family or friends. Most times that I did, I sat outside or in the car.

Presently, my home is one that was constructed with accessibility for aging and wheelchairs. I and my guests can access the front entrance, any room in the house and its immediate surroundings. So many who visit remark how they wish they had the same sense of security knowing that they could continue to live where they do as they age or should an accident befall.

Please, support HB 2336. It costs so little and accomplishes so much.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my experiences and thoughts.

Sincerely,
John D. Curtis