

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette

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February 25, 2021

House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

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

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette remains focused on creating solutions to the challenges of poverty for the young people who need it most. We are dedicated to serving communities where the need is greatest and are interested in scaling the most effective solutions. **More than ever, it is apparent to us that secure and stable housing is central to this mission.**

We write you today in support of HB 2163, which moves Oregon closer to providing ongoing housing support for Oregon's most vulnerable young people. The proposed legislation seeks to establish a long-term rental assistance fund at Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), making regionally specific investments for youth exiting the foster care system, correctional or residential settings, or otherwise experiencing homelessness.

The \$4.5 million investment in HB 2163 addresses the needs of those disproportionately impacted by our current pandemic. While Oregon's revenue forecast has dramatically improved, health and economic suffering persists, and the impact has been borne by Oregon's BIPOC population and by families experiencing poverty. In Oregon, 51% of youth experiencing homelessness are from communities of color, and 34% are Black.

We imagine we will discover that \$4.5 million is not sufficient to sustain rental assistance for Oregon's most vulnerable youth. We therefore look forward to working with OHCS upon passage to ensure appropriate data is collected to scale further investment serving this population.

We also hope to support data collection and analysis which ensures this targeted approach can be transferred to the multitude of other vulnerable populations in need of long-term rental assistance.

We urge your support of HB 2163.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cindy Adams".

Cindy Adams
President & CEO
United Way of the Columbia-Willamette