

Submitter: Richard van Pelt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing
Measure: HB4118

I write to ask that the Committee vote NO on HB 4118 and its -1 amendment.

Well intentioned as this bill appears, it takes the problem of affordable housing and uses it to undermine all that makes Oregon Oregon - an enviable land use system that protects the rural heart of our state. It takes the dreams we have of affordable housing and uses it to undermine the dream we have worked a generation toward: a vibrant rural economy that can coexist with its urban neighbors.

I am profoundly concerned that HB 4118 creates ghettos. The designation of an area as set aside for a certain class of person brings to mind the dystopian vision of South African townships. In addition, nothing in the bill prevents the original “workforce” housing being flipped and gentrified.

The bill has a bias toward single family housing at a time when many workers cannot earn enough to afford and maintain such housing. We cannot continue to use yesterday’s templates for today’s problems.

The bill seemingly, willfully, takes families struggling to find housing and expels them from the central cores of their communities. We need real actions to increase diverse and affordable housing options where people need and want to live, inside UGBs — near work, school, shopping, and more. This bill would do just the opposite. This is a stealth bill that benefits those who have sought to destroy our land use system and mocks the real need we have for affordable housing by co-opting a real long-term need in the short-term interests of builders and speculators. At a time when we need to reduce our carbon footprint, do we really want a public policy that makes our “workforce” commute further to work, to school, and to services?