

Submitter: Valerie Brown

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB2982

On behalf of United Policyholders, we strongly encourage your support of AB 2982 in its amended form. The provisions in this bill come from things that some insurers are already doing voluntarily for some of their customers to expedite and improve claim settlements, or that is already law in another state, so we know these claim reforms can be done and should be done.

United Policyholders is a national nonprofit whose mission is to be a trustworthy and useful information resource and an effective voice for consumers of all types of insurance in all 50 states, we would like to voice our support for AB 2982. Our work is divided in three programs: Roadmap to Recovery®, which provides tools and resources for solving insurance problems after an accident, loss, illness or other adverse event; Roadmap to Preparedness, which promotes disaster preparedness and insurance literacy through outreach and education in partnership with civic, faith based, business and other non-profit associations; and Advocacy and Action, which advances pro-consumer laws and public policy related to insurance matters.

With our work helping Oregon residents grappling with their insurance claims in the aftermath of the 2020 wildfires, we saw firsthand how devastating and draining the itemization requirement is. And because it is so overwhelming, the provisions of the bill should be most helpful and appreciated by future disaster survivors dealing with insurance claims as part of their recovery process.

Regarding Section (3), the requirement to advance less than full Contents/Personal Property available coverage in exchange for not having to complete an itemized inventory is fully justified:

- The current process is inhumane. California wildfire survivors impacted since their states passed legislation providing this type of advance have voiced their appreciation for having an incredible burden removed, which allowed them to focus on the more complicated process of rebuilding.
- Homeowner paid for a maximum amount of contents insurance coverage, without being required by the insurer to provide any documentation for that amount of coverage. All their contents are gone. Arguably they should be entitled to that max amount, as stated by AARP. The 70% proposed advance is a good start.

Not making a distinction between a federal disaster declaration and a “declared” will be a benefit to the insurance consumers in Oregon, whose recovery process is just as complicated and painful, but who may be penalized by residing in a smaller

community which, while impacted tremendously by a disaster, may not have incurred enough financial losses to qualify for a federal disaster declaration.

Leveling the playing field between insurers and their insurance company by providing information to consumers on how their insurer handles depreciation instead of the black box that currently exists will help consumers better navigate their personal property claim and avoid the exhausting rounds of repeated resubmittals and requests for more information.