



SO Health-E

Advocating for Health Equity

February 28, 2023

Representative Maxine Dexter
Chair, House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St NE, H-283
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 2001 to address Oregon’s statewide housing crisis

Dear Chair Dexter and Members of the Committee:

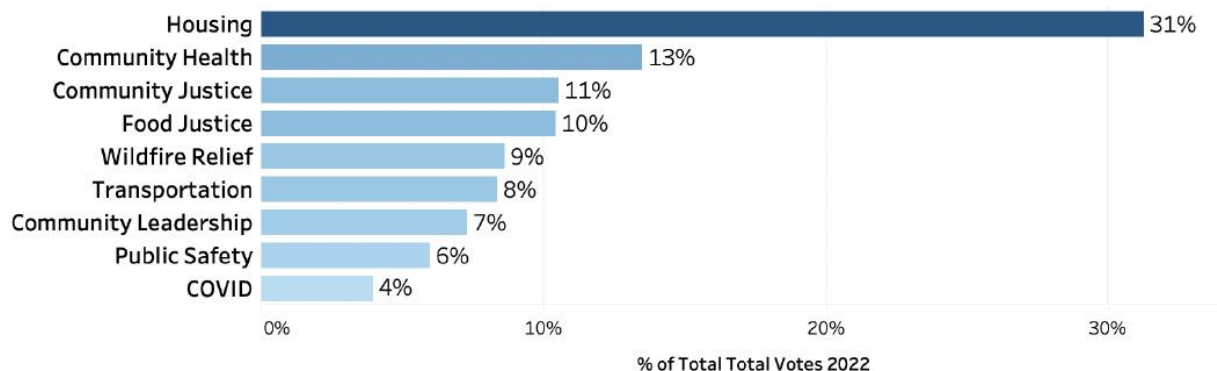
HB 2001 is needed now to address multiple aspects of the top priority for Southern Oregon communities: housing. That’s why SO Health-E, the Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition (RHEC) serving Jackson and Josephine Counties urges strong support and swift action to pass House Bill 2001.

In 2022, SO Health-E did a community priorities survey of residents in Jackson and Josephine Counties, prioritizing the voices of people of color, wildfire survivors, LGBTQ+ people, Spanish speaking households with children, people living with a disability, students, and low-income people.

The #1 issue that community members prioritized was housing. Specifically, we heard a lot about housing affordability, accessible housing for those living with a disability, and systemic barriers to accessing housing such as racism in the housing rental and homebuying markets.

Total Votes by Category.

Housing was voted by survey participants as their #1 priority.



Families in our region can't wait. The important elements in this bill are needed now to stabilize families and communities in Southern Oregon and across the state, including:

- Creating an equity dashboard within OHCS to track progress on closing persistent gaps in housing access in Oregon
- Addressing accessibility needs in Oregon's housing supply for people with disabilities
- Providing essential and reasonable negotiated improvements to Oregon's eviction statutes to promote stability and payment rather than displacement and eviction.
- Expanding investments in youth homelessness prevention, prioritizing services for school-aged children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families.
- Providing \$3 million in seed financing for the construction of affordable workforce rental housing.
- Addressing our long-term housing production challenges by establishing enforceable standards for local jurisdictions to promote the production of abundant, equitable, affordable and diverse housing options.

Our community has been in a housing crisis for years, which was made worse by wildfires in 2020. We are pleased to see that HB 2001 reflects the urgency of the crisis too many Oregonians are experiencing due to lack of housing, inadequate services, and eviction statutes designed for displacement instead of stability.

We believe that this bill does not go far enough, but is a good start at addressing longstanding inequities in Oregon's housing market that have kept people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people living with a disability, and people working low paying jobs at risk of losing housing, being forced to live in unsafe or inadequate housing that does not meet their needs, or living unsheltered. This is a health equity crisis and a civil rights issue, and must be addressed with the strongest possible new policies, funding, and accountability mechanisms.

We applaud your committee's thoughtful work on this bill, and your vote to pass HB 2001 to the House floor with a do pass recommendation. We urge swift passage of the bill in the House floor vote.

Sincerely,



Michelle Glass
Policy and Advocacy Coordinator,
SO Health-E, the Regional Health Equity Coalition serving Jackson and Josephine Counties