

Submitter: TomiRene Hettman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB603

My name is TomiRene Hettman. I am a proud founding member of Residents Organizing for Change, (ROC), a statewide network of advocates who are speaking up to have a lasting impact on Housing Policy here in Oregon. I am also Co-Chair for Home Forward's Resident Advisory Committee, and Resident Commissioner on their Board of Commissioners.

I've become an expert in navigating the housing system due to living in affordable housing. I've experienced the stress and horrors of living in a car or tent. When I was fortunate enough to obtain the thyroids medication I needed for survival, it would become inert within 48-72 hours due to either the freezing temperatures of Winter, or the scorching ones of Summer. Even worse, I was repeatedly denied the biopsy I begged for years to have done, being told by one doctor after another: "You don't have cancer. you're just a depressed, para-menopausal woman who's homeless." It wasn't until 7 years AFTER I obtained housing in a Home Forward owned building, that I finally got the biopsy and surgery that saved my life!

If the homelessness doesn't kill you, the stigma attached to it is more than capable of doing so!

I would have been able to access housing and life-saving medical treatment much sooner had I been part of a program like the People's Housing Assistance Fund SB603.

Please support SB603 as it will provide resources to low-income/no-income Oregonians who are in dire need of help to obtain housing, or to stay housed. We know without a doubt, that housing and having a safe place to call home gives people the opportunity to use their voices to help others. Our dream is to be one of the many, not one of the fortunate few who have a safe, stable place to call home. A home in which we can thrive, not just merely survive.

In closing, I offer the following quote from my personal mentor in faith, Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda:

" A life lived without purpose or value, the kind in which one doesn't know the reason why one was born, is joyless and lackluster. To just live, eat and die without any real sense of purpose surely represents a life pervaded by the world of animality. On the other hand, to do, create or contribute something that benefits others, society and ourselves and to dedicate ourselves as long as we live to that challenge---that is a life of true satisfaction, a life of value. It is a humanistic and lofty way to live."
(6/15/96)

Please support the passage of SB603 to help Oregonians keep a roof over their heads under which they can thrive.

Thank you for your consideration,
TomiRene Hettman, ROC member and
Home Forward Resident Commissioner