



March 16, 2023

To: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

RE: Support for HB 3488-1

Dear Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Radcliffe and I am writing on behalf of Habitat for Humanity Portland Region to urge your strong support for House Bill 3488-1. This bill's Dash One amendments make strategic investments to expand homeownership opportunities and services statewide and support fair housing education, outreach and enforcement.

In the Portland region, we are faced with skyrocketing housing costs, which are integrally tied to wealth and health disparities. Majority white homeowners have reaped a windfall in equity growth over the past few decades, while BIPOC households and younger families have scrambled to keep up with rising rents and have been almost entirely closed out of homeownership. Black Portlanders own homes at half the rate of white Portlanders, and this gap is worsening. BIPOC homeownership has suffered from redlining and urban renewal, and more recently, predatory lending, displacement and gentrification, and the inequitable economic fallout of the pandemic. Compounding those factors, rising interest rates and inflation means that [half as many Black Americans](#) can afford home ownership today as could in 2021.

In partnership with local communities, Habitat Portland Region is working to change the trajectory for hundreds of families through homeownership. We are using the funds currently available in Oregon, and we are prepared to do more. Over 80% of our region's Habitat homeowners are households of color. From Gresham, to Lake Oswego, to Hillsboro, we are building high-quality, energy-efficient homes that are proven to set families on a path to better health outcomes, improved high school graduation rates, and intergenerational wealth building.

Habitat for Humanity Portland Region celebrates the targeted investments included in HB 3488 with the Dash One amendments:

- \$73 million to support OHCS homeownership programs
- \$10 million in the Home Ownership Assistance Account to provide down payment assistance grants to culturally responsive, culturally specific or tribal entities
- \$25 million in down payment assistance resources to improve the reach of OHCS's mortgage lending programs

- \$4 million to provide grants to the nine federally recognized tribes to provide homeownership services, such as home repairs, homebuyer education and down payment assistance
- \$4.8 million to provide grants to up to 24 culturally responsive or specific organizations to expand homeownership services
- \$2.4 million to the Fair Housing Council of Oregon to support fair housing statewide
- \$2.3 million to support the bureau's Fair Housing education, outreach and enforcement

Our affiliate partners with Proud Ground to set an affordable initial sales price and to maintain each home's affordability for future homeowners through the community land trust model. We maximize public investments through leveraging private dollars, donated materials, and volunteer labor. However, we clearly need increased public funds to bring homeownership within reach for our homebuyers, who have a median household income of \$41,000 per year. Over the past two years, we have seen interest rates more than double. With down payment assistance, we can continue to serve first-time homebuyers who work hard to support our community but earn a modest wage as an in-home caregiver, drug and alcohol counselor, or administrative assistant.

As homeownership providers, the Habitat for Humanity network urges your targeted investment in critical programs that expand opportunities for Oregonians to plant roots in their communities and begin building intergenerational wealth. Organizations like Habitat for Humanity are well-positioned to help meet Oregon's supply shortfalls. Your support of the critical investments included in HB 3488-1 will help ensure we succeed together.

Thank you for your consideration and service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Radcliffe', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sarah Radcliffe
Director of Government Relations
Habitat for Humanity Portland Region