

Testimony for HB3482

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to providing Oregonians with housing solutions. I am LaVeta Gilmore Jones, a leader in the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition and former co-director of Leaven Community from 2014-2022, in whom the work of the coalition is ongoing. We are in the building of Salt & Light Lutheran Church located on land at 5431 NE 20th Ave in Portland, OR. I am testifying to advocate for the full funding and passage of HB 3482.

Yesterday I received a request from the sister of a beloved member in our community asking for help to locate affordable housing for her brother, who is a 60+ year old African American man with special needs. I will use the name Anthony to protect his privacy.

After growing up in inner NE Portland and living with family members all of his life, Anthony would like to try living in his own place with supportive help. He currently lives with his sister in an apartment 9 miles away from Leaven/Salt & Light and his desire is to be near the church. LeavenCommunity at Salt & Light is his home base and every morning at 6:30 am he takes an hour-long commute via bus and walking to the building. This is a place where many neighborhood meetings and activities occur and he assists staff, volunteers and visitors, answering questions and being present. This is his long time community of people and relationships and he wants to live in this neighborhood that is home for him.

Salt & Light Lutheran's plans to create affordable housing in the mid-2000's failed. After having gone through an 18 month process to get a conditional use removed from the land, the recession hit and funds dried up. They ended up having to sell the land for market rate housing.

Now one of the congregations in the Land and Housing Coalition is .8 of a mile from Salt & Light. They decided to build affordable housing on their land three years ago, and have since spent the time identifying funds for pre-development work. Just think, if they had had access to the funding in this bill they would be further along in their process for building housing and perhaps Chris' dream of living in housing close to the church would be more of a possibility.

We thank you for working with us in the past on legislation that makes it possible for faith communities to build affordable housing on the land they steward. Now we are asking for help to make sure these projects can get off the ground and be built so people like Anthony can continue to thrive and live where they are known and loved.