

Submitter: Kara Ralston
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Joint Ways & Means Committee of Oregon,

Our state will be healthier, stronger, and more resilient when everyone has what they need to thrive. That's why I support the People's Budget—a clear set of policies and investments that will lift up our communities and strengthen the state by using a racial, gender, and economic justice framework.

The People's Budget includes smart, community-led policies, investments, and workforce supports to address systemic inequities in Oregon, including the Fair Shot Agenda:

Indigenous Language Justice—SB 612, SB 911
Reproductive Health and Access to Care—HB 2002
Stable Homes Homelessness Prevention Package—HB 5511, HB 2001, SB 611
In Defense of Humanity—SB 337, HB 2467

Key investments outlined in the People's Budget to advance immigrant justice, fix Oregon's broken public defense system, make childcare accessible and affordable, and many other important investments are not adequately funded under the Co-Chairs Budget Framework. Legislators must invest in communities now - rather than reserving even more revenue in our already strong and healthy rainy day fund.

\$100M for Rental Assistance - Emergency rent assistance and eviction prevention resources at the community level allow swift and decisive intervention to prevent Oregon renters from falling into homelessness. If we don't invest in prevention efforts at scale, the cycle of displacement and eviction will overwhelm our homelessness response efforts. Like many Portlanders, I live next to a bank of rundown RVs where homeless people struggle to survive. We need to make the many cracks in our safety net smaller before it comes to this.

\$261M In Defense of Humanity - It is time to end decades of disinvestment in Oregon's public defense system and ensure everyone receives their constitutional right to legal Representation. All Oregonians accused of crime should have access to adequate legal representation.

\$3.5M for Indigenous Language Justice - All Oregonians have the right to understand and be understood. Oregon is home to over 35,000 people whose primary language is one of more than 30 Indigenous languages. Yet, none of Oregon's statewide

systems reliably provide services or interpretation in Indigenous languages.

\$10M to fully fund the Reproductive Health and Access to Care program at OHA - The Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade eliminated the federal constitutional right to abortion and set a dangerous precedent for who has the authority to make decisions for us about our bodies. At the same time, states across the nation are taking steps to ban and restrict access to gender-affirming care. These are life-saving healthcare.

Please fully fund important immigrant justice programs such as the Oregon Worker Relief, Universal Legal Representation, and the Climate Change Fund. Our communities are healthier and more resilient when we have strong systems of mutual care that include all of us.

I urge you to support the policies and investments in the People's Budget and the Fair Shot Agenda.

Sincerely,
Kara Ralston