

Submitter: Nancy Donovan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB1530

The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 13, 2024

To: Senators Kayse Jama, Chair; Dick Anderson, Vice-Chair; and members Tim Knopp, Deb Patterson, Janeen Sollman, Senate Committee on Housing and Development Re: SB 1530 -3 – Housing Investment Package – Support

The League of Women Voters of Oregon wholeheartedly supports providing resources and services to Oregonians who do not have stable and secure housing or who are living in temporary shelter. We further support increased efforts to preserve and develop regulated low-income housing and urge passage of SB 1530-3 with additions.

Our support is based on the following League positions: government must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs, and when families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, the government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.

Funding for shelters and homelessness prevention are critical provisions in the bill. Resources for infrastructure projects and for affordable housing land acquisition will promote development and help increase supply. We support these and the other allocations included in the bill.

The League recommends the following additions:

- Affordable housing preservation: One of the most effective ways to house low-income households is preservation of existing affordable housing. The League joins the Oregon Housing Alliance in recommending \$30 million for preservation projects

including, for example, preserving manufactured home parks at risk of closure and regulated housing with expiring affordability restrictions. While this amount will not be enough to meet the need, it will help preserve about 400 homes.

- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs): The bill allocates \$5 million for IDAs, but the League joined with a large number of organizations, businesses, financial institutions, and providers in encouraging the Legislature to increase the amount to \$10 million. That will allow the IDA program to continue to serve the same number of people as they make their way towards self-sufficiency.
- Affordable homes for first-time buyers: The Joint Task Force on Addressing Racial Disparities in Home Ownership recommended flexible funding for production of new, affordable homes in both urban and rural areas. We support allocating \$15 million in order to increase housing production and reduce racial disparities in homeownership.

The recent Portland State University 2023 Oregon Statewide Homelessness Estimates report underscores the urgency of your work. It explains that homelessness increased by 8.5% overall from 2022 and unsheltered homelessness increased 17.2%. This trend is nationwide, but Oregon had the second highest rate of unsheltered homelessness in the country at 65%.

We have the highest rates of family homelessness and unaccompanied, unsheltered youth homelessness. This is not just an urban problem. Sherman and Clatsop Counties had the highest rates of overall and unsheltered homelessness per 1,000 residents in the state.

The programs and services funded by the resources outlined in SB 1530-3 are desperately needed and we support SB 1530-3 with the additions listed above. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

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