



**To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development**

**From: Matt Serres, Fair Housing Council of Oregon**

**Date: February 14, 2024**

**RE: In support of Senate Bill 1530**

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Housing and Development Committee:

As the Legal Director of the Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO), I am submitting the following testimony in support of SB 1530. FHCO is a private non-profit civil rights organization whose work is to end housing discrimination and ensure equal access to housing throughout Oregon. We write in support of SB 1530, because it will invest in critical rental assistance, eviction prevention, and culturally-specific services that advance fair housing.

The homelessness prevention services that will be supported by SB 1530 contribute to fair housing throughout the state. Rental assistance through community action agencies and community-based organizations affords greater access to housing equality and choice for many of the protected classes recognized under state and federal fair housing laws (race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and families with minor children, among others). Availability of rental assistance itself expands opportunities for fair housing enforcement, as rental assistance is its own protected class under state fair housing law ("Source of Income").

Culturally-specific housing stability services such as those provided by the Urban League also affirmatively further fair housing. The Fair Housing Council of Oregon is proud to work alongside the Urban League of Portland as part of a fair housing enforcement collaborative that brings together multiple partners and includes El Programa Hispano Católico and Legal Aid Services of Oregon as well. That collaborative serves not only as a mechanism whereby Urban League of Portland connects their clients with FHCO's resources that combat illegal housing discrimination, but also as a channel for FHCO to connect individuals with Urban League's culturally-specific housing services. Targeted investments in housing stability for immigrant Oregonians through the Home Fund at Oregon Worker Relief would also bring greater housing equality and choice for individuals we serve, furthering fair housing with new access to housing opportunity.

For those reasons, we urge support for these investments in programs that prevent eviction and create new opportunities for protected classes disparately impacted by displacement to stay housed.

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