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February 20, 2025

House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Chair Pam Marsh
Vice-Chair Tom Andersen
Vice-Chair Vikki Breese-Iverson

Re: Support for House Bill 3378

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee On Housing and Homelessness:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 3378, which requires residential landlords to offer a method of accessing dwelling units other than software on tenant-owned phones or other electronic devices for the dwelling to be considered habitable.

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to low and very low-income older adults, aged 55 and over, experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County.

Although digital access methods provide benefits to certain users, it imposes unnecessary costs and burdens to certain members of the population such as those without access to smartphones, low-income individuals who cannot afford new technology, and older adults who are on the wrong side of the digital divide. A recent study concluded that a digital divide does indeed exist and impacts certain vulnerable populations:¹

Using a nationally representative sample of U.S. older adults, we identified a shrinking but persistent digital divide among them, in particular among those who are less educated, have lower income, and belong to Hispanic minorities, suggesting that these people might be particularly vulnerable to the digital divide.

¹Yang, R. et al. (2024). Digital divide as a determinant of health in the U.S. older adults: prevalence, trends, and risk factors. *BMC Geriatrics*, 24(1027) <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-024-05612-y>



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NWPP strongly supports House Bill 3378 as we feel that it is critically important that vulnerable populations, such as those who we serve, are not burdened with additional requirements for accessing their homes. Currently, we have many clients who would be negatively impacted if required to use a mobile phone or other electronic device to enter their dwelling unit.

Senior housing precarity and senior homelessness are a growing issue to Oregon, let's not make the issue worse in lieu of the convenience of others.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Alan DeLaTorre (aland@nwproject.org).

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