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Date: March 5, 2025
To: Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson
and Members of the Housing Committee on Housing and Homelessness
From: LeadingAge Oregon
Subject: HB 3589

LeadingAge Oregon is an association of housing and long-term care providers, and we support HB 3589.

Per Oregon's Economic and Revenue Forecast released February 26, 2025, the number of persons 65 years and older has exceeded the number of children under the age of 18 since 2023 and will only continue to expand. This bill is a necessary step in incentivizing developers to build age and disability-friendly housing, rather than simply increasing the supply of multifamily units with limited accessible options.

Right now, waitlists for older adult affordable housing are two to five years for singles and even longer for couples. But housing challenges for seniors include but go beyond affordability - many are forced to leave their homes not just due to financial constraints, but because existing housing is not adequate for safe aging in place.

Older adults need housing that accommodates walkers and wheelchairs, offers elevator access instead of stairs, and includes grab bars, wide doorways, walk-in showers, and other safety features that promote safety and prevent falls and injuries. Without these, too many seniors are trapped in their homes, literally unable to leave their units because they cannot safely navigate stairs, access their showers, or move freely in their space. This leads to isolation, poorer health outcomes, and costly medical interventions.

A preventable fall in an inaccessible home could result in hospitalization and a stay in a skilled nursing facility—forcing someone into higher levels of care sooner than necessary. These avoidable events increase healthcare costs, place undue strain on individuals and families, and create additional financial pressure on publicly funded systems like Medicaid.

HB 3589 not only incentivizes the construction of age-friendly housing but also supports home modifications that help seniors safely remain in their homes.

I urge your support for HB 3589—because building for accessibility benefits everyone.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Milligan
Chief Executive Officer
LeadingAge Oregon