



WOMEN'S FOUNDATION of OREGON

Invest in Women. Invest in Oregon. Invest in Change.

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for SB 722 – Protecting Affordable Housing for Oregon's Women and Families

Dear Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson and Members of the Committee,

The Women's Foundation of Oregon (WFO) is writing in strong support of SB 722, which prohibits the use of software to set rents or occupancy rates and reduces the exemption period for new dwelling units from rent increase caps. This bill is a necessary step toward ensuring fairness and affordability in Oregon's housing market, particularly for women and marginalized communities who are disproportionately impacted by rising housing costs.

Our research, including the *Count Her In* report, highlights the severe economic inequities faced by women, particularly women of color, single mothers, and low-income households. Oregon women, on average, earn less than their male counterparts, yet they bear a disproportionate share of housing costs. With over half of single mothers in Oregon experiencing housing instability, the use of algorithmic rent-setting software exacerbates an already dire situation. These software programs, often controlled by large corporate landlords, prioritize profit over people, driving up rents beyond what the market would naturally dictate and pricing vulnerable communities out of stable housing.

Furthermore, reducing the exemption period for new dwelling units from 15 years to seven years ensures that rental caps apply more swiftly, protecting tenants from unchecked rent increases. Women, particularly those in caregiving roles or with limited economic mobility, are most at risk when housing costs rise unpredictably. By implementing these measures, SB 722 will help prevent displacement, reduce the gender wealth gap, and create more equitable opportunities for stable, affordable housing in Oregon.

Stable housing is foundational to economic security, health, and overall well-being. We urge the Legislature to pass SB 722 to ensure that Oregon's rental market remains fair and accessible for all, particularly for those who are most vulnerable to housing instability.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Libra Forde
Executive Director
Women's Foundation of Oregon