



February 13, 2026

To the Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government

RE: OPPOSITION to SB 1514: Oregon needs a humane and effective approach to homelessness.

Dear Chair Meek, Vice Chair Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is John Miller and I am writing on behalf of Fair Housing Council of Oregon to testify in opposition to SB 1514.

Fair Housing Council works with various marginalized groups in the unhoused population to help remove barriers that prevent them from securing permanent shelter. The unhoused people we work with are not drug addicts and criminals; they are people with disabilities, people over the age of 55, and families with children. Our experience mirrors the national trends reported by the National Alliance to End Homelessness: homelessness is increasing most rapidly for people with disabilities, families with children, and the elderly.

Geographic disparities amplify the dangers of homelessness for these groups in rural areas as well. Shelter for unhoused people is more readily available in urban areas while unhoused people in suburban and rural areas are less likely to have access to emergency shelter. The lack of shelter in rural and suburban areas does not drive unhoused people to urban areas; instead it exposes them to crime and illness, which in turn increases public health and safety costs for the community.

All of us need a roof over our heads, but too many Oregonians are struggling to afford housing. The reasons are clear: rising costs, not enough shelters, not enough housing, and wages that haven't kept up with rent.

If the law is repealed, it will also pave the way for harsh local rules that make things worse. It will increase the risk of fines, tickets, and jail time for people experiencing homelessness who have no other place to go. Fines and jail time don't solve homelessness. A 2024 study of 100 major U.S. cities found that punitive approaches did not decrease homelessness.

The populations we serve already have significant barriers to securing stable housing because our communities have failed them. Repealing ORS 195.530 to enable local governments to criminalize homelessness will create even more barriers. As unhoused people acquire criminal convictions for the offense of existing, those criminal records will put stable housing that much farther out of reach.

We all agree that we must move forward on homelessness, not backward. Let's stay focused on proven solutions that can help all Oregonians find and maintain stable housing. I urge you to oppose SB 1514 and prioritize proven, humane, and effective solutions to homelessness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Miller  
Executive Director

**1221 SW Yamhill Street, Portland, Oregon 97205**