



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 16, 2026

Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters, members of the Committee,

For those who are unaware, I have the privilege of overseeing intergenerational wealth-building programs at the NAYA (Native American Youth and Family Center). Which includes our Pathways to Homeownership programs. NAYA is one of 21 Homeownership Centers that get to help everyday Oregonians realize their dream of homeownership.

When I realized that we, the legislature, were not going to fund Down Payment Assistance, I knew I wanted to gather folks to discuss potentially creative solutions. And the result of months of conversations is HB 4136. I want to acknowledge that this concept has, in some form, been brought before this body before, and I say that because I have learned over the years that sometimes legislation takes many terms and many iterations. So I appreciate all the times the Mortgage Interest Deduction (MID) has come before this body.

Where we landed for this iteration is a narrow and, to me, thoughtful approach. I typically would start with what this bill does, but I am going to switch it up to address some claims that have been circulating.

There has been an assertion that these funds simply disappear into the General Fund with no guarantee that they support homeownership. That is not accurate. HB 4136 creates a dedicated account, the Oregon Homeownership Opportunity Account, and directs all annual revenue gains into that fund for down payment assistance.

This bill ends the state subsidy for personal-use vacation properties that remain vacant for much of the year and redirects those dollars to a dedicated account for Down Payment Assistance across Oregon.

I will tell you from experience, down payment assistance is one of the most effective tools we have to create stability in our communities. It is a one-time investment that produces long-term returns for families and for communities. And those who know me know that I am not a fan of

REPRESENTATIVE ANNESSA HARTMAN
HOUSE DISTRICT 40



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simply handing out money without teaching. You will hear from HO Counselors today that folks who qualify for DPA must go through an entire process before they can access the funds.

This is what creates intergenerational wealth. We are providing people who never thought they could purchase a home with the tools and knowledge they never received. While also creating stability and roots in our community. Enabling our constituents to have the opportunity to build equity that can be passed to the next seven generations.

Lastly, I want to remind us all that last session, this body passed HB 2698, which creates a state goal to increase homeownership rates to 65% by 2030. The bill we are discussing today is a tool that can help us achieve this goal immediately. This program already exists, and people are already hired to do the work, not only within the state but throughout Oregon.

Our Homeownership Centers have waiting lists by the hundreds and are ready and waiting to get folks into homes that are available now. To give you an idea, last year the HO centers were asked how many dpa dollars they could get out by the end of the year. The response from 20 out of the 21 centers was \$8.9 million. \$8.9 million to help over 250 Oregonians get into stable homeownership in just 6 months! Colleagues, this program works.

HB 4136 restores the original purpose of the mortgage interest deduction: to promote homeownership. Not vacant homes. Homeownership.

Colleagues, during this housing crisis we have been discussing for years, we have a solution that will help the crisis immediately. HB 4136 is that solution. I urge your support for HB 4136.

Sincerely,

Representative Annessa Hartman
House District 40 – Gladstone, Oregon City, North Clackamas County