



Date: 4/13

RE: Letter of Support for HB 3115 and HB 2367

Central City Concern (CCC) is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. Central City Concern operates about 2,100 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 12 Federally Qualified Health Centers, makes 1,200 job placements annually and operates social services for the community justice programs in Multnomah and Clackamas counties. **Our programs and properties span Senate Districts 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25; and House Districts 33, 36, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 and 50**

Oregon has one of the highest rates of unsheltered homelessness with nearly 50% of all people experiencing homelessness sleeping outside. Although Oregon doesn't have the largest unmet need in the nation, we are dramatically failing at providing consistent sheltering and emergency housing options. When this lack of stability interventions is paired with enforcement actions that force people to move frequently, any outreach or community engagement efforts are continually disrupted; all but ensuring people's experiences of homelessness are prolonged for greater and greater lengths of time. This is likely contributing to the increases in chronic homelessness (people who have been homeless for a year or more and have a disabling condition). In other words, we are both leaving people without adequate support and making it harder for them to connect to the services that are and could help them find stability sooner.

HB 3115 brings forward case law set in *Martin v. City of Boise* that ruled people experiencing homelessness cannot be punished by the government for the government's own inaction to meet the basic needs of the whole community. HB 2367 goes one step further to assert what right community member should have in public space and to protect the rights of people experiencing homelessness while in that public space.

Ultimately, we must do the hard work of ending homelessness. Ending homelessness requires systemic change, like aligning resources, key partners, incentives, and policy choices to creating housing stability and connection to social and economic supports across multiple systems. We have homeless service agencies spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on outreach workers trying to find people and providing people clothes, food, hygiene supplies and other survival materials, only to have another part of our system, also spending hundreds of thousands of dollars continually moving people



and discarding these supplies. This is a massive misalignment of goals and incentives, wasting millions in resources.

Our community must rally behind a shared understanding of success that achieves continual year over year decreases, preventing and dramatically shorten, households' experiences of homelessness and ensure all public partners that touch or impact the issue of homelessness track and work towards achieving this shared goal, recognizing the part they play in overall population health and stability.

Thank you,
Mercedes Elizalde
Public Policy Director
Central City Concern