



28 March 2021

Senator Kayse Jama, Chair &
Senator Dennis Linthicum, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon Legislature
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the Committee:

My name is Jimmy Jones and I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency here in Salem, where we serve people in poverty in Marion and Polk Counties, as well as nine other Oregon counties in some programs. I am also the Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, which for nearly 40 years has been Oregon's delivery system for homeless, housing, energy, weatherization and other anti-poverty programs. And I am a member of the Housing Subcommittee of the Racial Justice Council. My agency operates the ARCHES Project here in Salem, which is one of the most well-known, widely respected and innovative homeless service models in Oregon. We support House Bill 2006-A, which will provide desperately needed financial support for navigation centers across Oregon.

Our ARCHES Project is the primary direct service program for the unsheltered homeless in our community. We provide shelter, permanent housing, food, showers and laundry, mobile services, outreach to camps, critical mail services (so the very sick and very disabled homeless population can receive their medicine), transportation services, and other desperately needed direct services to the homeless in our community. Our Day Center alone sees more than 1,000 clients each month, where people come to get a hot meal, escape the cold and wet weather, and find connections to treatment, medical services, and mental health.

Despite all that work, many service gaps remain in Salem. We have suffered through a year unlike any other, with perhaps twice the number of homeless deaths that we see in a normal year. Many of those were folks who could not access the regular shelter system, and were in desperate need of specialized non-congregant services, ones that would be funded by these navigation center projects. The navigation centers are a nationally recognized best practice, and were called out as desperately needed by Oregon Housing and Community Services Statewide Shelter Study. Our homeless crisis is a generational crisis, and it will take resources, time, expertise and long-term commitments to solve for zero. We believe this is a very effective and positive step, and urge your support for HB 2006-A.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JJ Jones".

Jimmy Jones
Executive Director