



P.O. Box 12267
Portland, OR 97212
p: 503.775.4931
www.PPAOregon.org

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

February 11, 2020

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the House Committee on Housing,

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon respectfully requests the committee's support of HB 2842 to create a Healthy Homes program. As members of the Fair Shot for All Coalition, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon supports this policy as part of the 2021 legislative agenda and the ongoing work for environmental justice in Oregon.

We stand with our reproductive justice partners who have long proclaimed that the fight for justice and equity does not end with having the right to make reproductive and sexual health decisions; that fight must include advocating for people to have the power and resources necessary to raise their families in safe environments and healthy communities. To fulfill that vision of reproductive justice, every Oregonian should be able to live in a healthy home — especially as Oregon experiences increasingly dangerous wildfire seasons and navigates a respiratory pandemic.

Yet 54% of Oregonians live in housing built before 1978 that is energy-inefficient and in need of repairs, weatherproofing, and upgrades for disaster resiliency. Families with low-incomes, families living in rural and tribal communities, and individuals that identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or people of color are the most impacted due to decades of redlining and other discriminatory practices. Consequently, these communities are more likely to experience sick days and hospital visits caused by mold, cold weather, asthma flare-ups, and the inability to take refuge from bad outdoor air quality. In 2017, Oregonians spent \$28 million on asthma-related hospital visits. Thirty-two percent of children live in energy burdened homes and asthma is the leading cause of missed school days.

Our housing quality problem is harming everyday people who are already hurting and putting a burden on our healthcare system. This is exacerbated by—and more dangerous during—a respiratory pandemic. Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon understands that housing and environmental quality are two important social determinants of health that directly impact health equity. We stand in solidarity with the community advocates and leaders who have long led the fight for environmental justice, and safe housing is an integral component of that fight.

That is why we support HB 2842, which creates a Healthy Homes program at the Oregon Healthy Authority to provide grants to eligible entities that provide financial assistance to persons in low-income households to repair and rehabilitate their residences and to landlords to repair and rehabilitate dwelling units.

Creating and funding a Healthy Homes program creates more equity for our communities and makes good fiscal sense for our state. HB 2842 will: 1) help low-income families spend less money on heating and cooling; 2) create good local jobs in retrofitting and repairs; 3) provide a refuge from increasingly bad outdoor air quality; 4) reduce burden on hospitals and families by supporting better respiratory health; and 5) reduce the number of sick days for both adults and kids.

Please vote yes on HB 2842 to help build an Oregon where everyone lives in a home that is healthy and safe.

Sincerely,
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Interim Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon