

Written testimony presented to the Oregon House of Representatives Committee on Housing

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Chair Fahey, and Members of the Committee,

I am an elected member of the Portland NAACP Executive Committee and I reside in Multnomah County. I ask you to vote in favor of House Bill 2578.

Professionally, I evaluate the efficacy, efficiency, and return on investment that results from equity-related efforts engaged in by agencies and companies, both public and private. In this work I have seen the long-term impacts of various strategies aimed at reducing inequities.

I am a homeowner and have benefitted from the mortgage interest deduction for 25 years. My parents benefited from it before me. I am also in the category of taxpayers who will not have access to the mortgage interest deduction if House Bill 2578 is enacted. Taxpayers like myself do not need this deduction.

We cannot claim ignorance of the deep and shameful past of Oregon's lawmakers, and the harmful legacy that we have inherited from them. Nor can we claim ignorance of the harm that is being caused through current and long-standing injustices and the generations of wealth building that has been denied to Oregonians through discriminatory practices and policies, particularly BIPOC households. But we can recognize that the mortgage interest deduction for high-income earners currently only serves to increase the wealth of the wealthy.

You can choose to continue the practice of wealth inequity in our state, or you can take the opportunity before you and reduce inequities in our tax policies and make Oregon a stronger, safer place for those who need it most. As a life-long Oregonian I implore you to pass House Bill 2578.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Dr. Lily Copenagle

Portland, OR