

Submitter: Eriko Ono

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1576

Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of the committee,

My name is Eriko Ono and I am a writing in support of SB1576. Accessible, affordable, housing for people with disabilities and mobility issues is very difficult to find. Increasing the percentage of units to 5% is a small start to ensuring we meet the needs of our vulnerable community members. I have read arguments opposing this increase stating the cost as well as the perceived lack of need for accessible units. I want to stress that there is absolutely a need. The issue we have nationwide is the lack of a centralized database that would make it easy for those needing accessible units and those who have accessible units to rent can find each other. Property management can take the initiative to list or make known their available, accessible units to local agencies who assist people searching for housing. I don't see how any of them can claim to have difficulty filling them if they took the initiative to identify where to find those who need them.

A 2024 report by the Oregon Legislature's Housing-Insecure, Medically Complex Older Oregonians Workgroup highlights by 2050, the state's older adult population is projected to reach 1,280,678, accounting for 24% of the total population. This increase underscores the growing demand for affordable housing that accommodates the evolving health and mobility needs of seniors. The report emphasizes that many older adults face challenges in accessing appropriate housing, often leading to institutionalization or homelessness.

The housing crisis affects everyone, but it disproportionately impacts people with disabilities, disabled veterans, and older adults. This crisis is likely to affect someone you know and love—whether it be a family member, friend, or neighbor—making it imperative that we take action now. Accessible housing allows people to remain near their families, participate in local businesses, and contribute meaningfully to society. It fosters a sense of belonging, stability, and dignity. It's past time Oregon's legislature increase the percentage of accessible, affordable housing units that will allow people with disabilities and aging Oregonians a place to call home.

Thank you,

Eriko Ono

Community member and disability advocate

