



COMMUNITY
VISION

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February 28, 2023

RE: House Bill 2001

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee:

I am Allen Hines, Housing Access Director at Community Vision.

Disability crosses all demographic categories and directly impacts one in four Oregonians. People with disabilities are chronically underserved in today's housing landscape. And while most of us have a story about our own or a relative's struggle with inaccessible housing, too little is being done to address the issues, negating individuals' desires to live independently and age in place.

Community Vision urges you to understand the fight for housing for people with disabilities as a matter of equity and inclusion. Adequate housing underpins much of what each of us does every day. Having the means to prepare meals, bathe, and leave one's home independently allows us to focus on other pursuits and achieve stability. This simple truth is part of the foundation of housing-first policies to address homelessness and housing instability. We fear that failing to account for the housing needs of people with disabilities will ultimately translate to less stability for our community as a whole.

The housing crisis is just as much a crisis for people with disabilities. We have distinct needs for accessibility features, and to assist us in this crisis, we need our leaders to help us know where to find units with the features we need and find ways to create accessible units that our housing supply lacks.

I have worked with numerous individuals whose housing required them to crawl to enter or access the main parts of their homes. Many have expressed that they do not engage in their communities as much as they want because they are busy meeting basic needs or they feel socially isolated as a result of unmet needs. I have committed to sharing their stories when they cannot, and I hope you will make every effort legislatively to honor their experiences and work to resolve the housing issues the disability community faces.

Accessibility and the concerns of people with disabilities are lacking in HB 2001. We previously offered the following points to better address the needs of people with disabilities in testimony on HB 2889:

- Defining "accessible housing" is critical to framing the issue and developing actionable strategies.
- Examining financial and regulatory impediments to developing accessible housing should be a requirement of the housing needs assessment.
- Disability status should be considered alongside other socioeconomic characteristics that impact housing production strategies.
- Accessibility should be included in analyses of existing and projected housing conducted every six years.
- The need for accessible housing should be included as a matter of statewide concern.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continued discussions of this bill and its implementation.

Sincerely,

Allen Hines
Housing Access Director
Community Vision