

Dear Chair Burdick, Vice-Chair Boquist, and members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue. I am a Realtor who lives in Portland, OR. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 852. Please pass this bill. I have been in real estate in the Portland area for 16 years and I, along with many other Realtors, are seeing a very disturbing trend in our cities. Our traditionally urban clients are selling their homes and leaving Portland in droves. They are moving out of state, or out to the suburbs or the country, and they are taking their tax dollars with them. They are not moving because of Covid; because they want more space. They are leaving Portland because they are frustrated by the horrible conditions of homelessness they are seeing every day. Oregonians who live in cities are exhausted and frustrated by this huge problem that seems to have no solution. Mortgage Interest reform would be a much-needed solution that would add \$100,000,000 annually, towards solving issues around the lack of affordable housing and severe homelessness. I strongly believe that there is the public will for this kind of measure right now. While many are leaving Portland to just escape, those who are staying and love this city, want to help. I've had so many conversations with friends, clients and family who say they are willing to donate money, to help in some way. This bill does just that. My personal household would be affected by this bill and I have no problem giving up some or all of our mortgage interest deduction in return for some solutions to our homelessness crisis, and lack of affordable housing catastrophe. I want my city back. I want my real estate business back! I so want to be able to help first-time homebuyers who have saved, and qualify for a loan, and have good jobs, buy their first home. That is basically impossible in this market. I am desperate to help middle-income clients who want to sell their current home and move up to their 2nd "forever" home. That can't happen right now because of the incredible lack of housing inventory. Folks who want to sell and then buy are stuck and fear they won't be able to get into a new home given the extreme level of competition right now. Our real estate market is a huge bottleneck right now, the likes of which I have never seen. And I worked the bubble in 2005-2008. I also worked the crash in 2008-2012 and the challenges of those real estate markets were nothing compared to the difficulty of trying to buy a house right now. The Mortgage Interest deduction is regressive. I believe that it artificially inflates housing prices. It no longer does what it was meant to do: help lower-income and middle-income folks afford a house purchase. It creates an even larger gap between the wealthy and those who are struggling. It is a housing subsidy for the rich and does not extend to low-income folks who are renting. We have a system where the more money you have, the more money you save. Clearly, that isn't working for anyone. Please pass Senate Bill 852! Thank you. Kari McGee, Principal Broker, Living Room Realty