



February 11, 2021

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 79

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First For Oregon. We elevate data and lived experience to prioritize children and center communities. We continue to connect a community of 115 advocates, coalitions, and organizations through The Children's Agenda, a legislative agenda championing equitable state legislative policies and shared investments to improve the lives of Oregon's children and their families.

SB 79 Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership is a priority issue on the 2021 Children's Agenda.

The Joint Task Force on Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership was a critical first step by the Legislature to understand and elevate the inequities in our current systems, and to lay out strategies to begin to address the racial disparities we see in homeownership rates in Oregon.

As stated in the [Task Force's report](#), the problem statement adopted by the Task Force links existing inequitable rates of homeownership to both the historic and current systemic racism in our housing and economic systems:

Oregon's communities of color do not have equal, fair, or equitable access to homeownership. A comprehensive review of public, private, and nongovernmental organization data sources show that communities of color own homes at lower rates than their white counterparts. These disparities are the result of historical and current discriminatory housing policies and practices, disparate access to credit, generational poverty, and racial biases, which are exacerbated by present-day barriers that disproportionately impact Oregon's communities of color.

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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Homeownership rates for Oregon from the 2014-19 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates show that rates are lower for communities of color in Oregon than for whites:

- White: 66%
- Asian: 61%
- American Indian/Alaskan Native: 46%
- Hispanic/Latino: 43%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 35%
- Black: 34%

Homeownership is a primary driver for individuals and families to build generational wealth. Perpetuating inequities in access to homeownership further widens the wealth gap between racial groups.

SB 79 supports the implementation of some of the strategies outlined by the Task Force by expanding how the Homeownership Assistance Program (HOAP) funds can be used and making the important change to allow HOAP funds to be administered by Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes.

SB 79 leverages key investments in the Governor's Recommended Budget to provide \$10 million in down payment assistance and \$2 million in outreach and language access resources for addressing racial disparities in homeownership, as well as bond funding for Local Innovation Fast Track (LIFT) Homeownership.

We also want to acknowledge the importance of language, and support the removal of outdated terminology through replacing 'minority' with 'persons of color'.

Thank you for your consideration and your service. We urge your support for SB 79.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

View the 2021 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda