



Attn. Chair Kayse Jama and Committee Members  
Senate Committee on Housing and Development  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St., NE  
Salem OR 97301

February 28, 2023

RE: SB 603 – People's Housing Assistance Fund Demonstration Program

Dear Legislators,

I am the founder and director of a non-profit in the Portland metropolitan area that supports zero to very low income citizens that have severe disabilities who can no longer support themselves or their families through work.

I founded the ASSIST Program in 2010 as an economic justice program. I have been an advocate for people and families with disabilities for 19 years. We meet destitute and very ill people every day that need economic support and advocacy.

At our program we fight for entitlement income in the form of disability benefits for our clients with the Social Security Administration. We spend months to years on our client's cases trying to expedite the benefits they so desperately need. Many lose everything while their cases are being reviewed for eligibility for these benefits. A guaranteed income program would aid this population tremendously too as disability is often the cause of homelessness.

We know that the monetary needs and expenses of families or people with disabilities are quite a bit more than most households. We know that many families of color will not let their sick relatives go homeless and that can lead to housing instability for the whole family too.

**I fully support SB 603.** A pilot of this nature has such broad implications for so many low-income families and individuals, from all walks of life, who struggle with their basic needs and to keep a roof over their heads.

I sincerely thank you for your consideration of this important step forward in this cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mellani Calvin".

Mellani Calvin  
Non-Attorney Representative, EDPNA  
Founder/Director