

COURTNEY NERON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 26



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support of SB444

February 5, 2025

Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

I write to you in strong support of SB444, a bill which strengthens accessibility standards, ensuring all Oregonians, regardless of ability, have access to safe, functional housing. SB 444 ensures responsible public funding, prioritizing accessible designs in subsidized housing. Features like common spaces, and adaptable restrooms allow individuals with disabilities to fully participate in their communities.

In 2018, as I was getting to know the many neighborhoods throughout my district, I heard a story from one constituent that I carry with me as I engage in legislative work. This man told me that he had been priced out of housing in Portland, priced out of housing in Tigard, and his rent had just gone up by \$100 and he didn't know how he would be able to stay in his apartment at the urban edge of Wilsonville. He said, "*I can't move farther out because I need a bus line to get to work and I have cerebral palsy so I have to have an accessible place to rent.*" While his story also speaks to the need for a robust and accessible transportation system, it highlights the limited housing options that my neighbors, our neighbors, have.

It is incumbent upon our community planning and housing production policies to ensure that we have a robust inventory of homes for people of all abilities. When I advocated for state investments in the apartment homes next to Mountainside High School, it was in part because of their commitment not only to deeply affordable inventory, but to universal design.

As we emphasize senior friendly living options, communities where people can age in place, and inclusive designs that incorporate the needs of our disability community, we must remember Land Use Goal 10 which insists that we "provide for the housing needs of citizens of the state". We must ensure that the housing we build is accessible to those who need it. I urge your support for SB444 so that our communities have the right quantity and quality of accessible units for people with disabilities and older adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Neron".

Representative Courtney Neron