

Oregon State Legislature:

I am writing to you today to urge your support for Bill 603 (SB603), which provides for 12 monthly payments of \$1,000 to individuals who are experiencing homelessness, are at risk of homelessness, are severely rent burdened, or earn at or below 60 percent of area median income.

Based on the City of Portland homelessness statistics, out of 3,800 people who slept outside, 51% of people are in shelters. In my role as a mental health crisis responder, I interact with houseless individuals daily. The majority of my clients are not wanting to be homeless but due to the housing crisis and lack of low-income housing leaves people to sleep outside or in shelters (if available).

According to the website Numbeo, it states in "Portland, Oregon, a single person's estimated monthly costs are 1,208.1\$ without rent." With section 8 housing waiting lists that often take 2-5 years, Bill 603 would give people the opportunity to have money to use on basic needs which include housing. Knowing that the cost of living is extremely high and rising, the money may be used for rent, emergency expenses, food, child care, or other goods or services of the participant's choosing.

According to the City of Portland homelessness statistics, "57% of the homeless population in Portland is disabled", this money would also be vital to assisting individuals to receive housing that is normally excluded from shelters. In Portland, if you cannot complete your acts of daily living then you are disqualified from staying at any shelter in the area unless referred by an outside agency having the proper assistance. The majority of homeless individuals are vulnerable and have fallen through the cracks and vulnerable.

As local and state leaders, it is our duty and responsibility to ensure all Oregonians are able to receive their basic needs. Homelessness has disproportionately impacted people of color and lower-income communities including seniors, families with kids, and houseless youth. I believe over the two years, Portland State monitoring this pilot study would be able to show data in support of providing support to those most vulnerable and in need.

The resources are life-saving measures and an essential first step to taking a more social justice approach to homelessness.

Thank you,

Adria Willoughby

