

Submitter: Reyna Gillet
On Behalf Of: Residents Organizing for Change ROC
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB603

To the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

My name is Reyna Gillet, and I am the Lead Housing Justice Organizer who helps to convene the statewide housing advocacy network called Residents Organizing for Change (ROC). ROC is made up of affordable housing residents and people who have known housing insecurity. I am inspired by the members of ROC who commit their time to advocating for Housing Justice for all Oregonians. ROC is equity in action, and as someone who has experienced housing insecurity, I believe in ROC members and I believe that SB603, the People's Housing Assistance Fund is the right bill at the right time.

Many Oregonians have not recovered from the uncertainty of the last three years. The COVID pandemic reiterated the need to be in our homes, where we can stay safe and take care of ourselves and our loved ones. Oregon experienced record breaking hot summers, and wildfires that displaced people who desperately need access to housing they can afford. Access to affordable housing is one of the biggest issues in our state. Cash assistance with a housing focus is a much needed investment in addressing the needs of cost burdened Oregonians.

The Oregon legislature has the opportunity to pass a bill that will create a pathway for those who have systemically been unable to access affordable housing. There is ample data from other guaranteed basic income programs across the nation that exhibit successful participant outcomes, and Oregonians could benefit from a similar program like the People's Housing Assistance Fund.

ROC members who worked on bringing this bill to life have navigated the affordable housing system and know how hard it can be to get on a waiting list to access housing, and in Oregon people can wait for 2 to 5 years. Putting money in the hands of struggling Oregonians across the state is good policy. We want this bill to help rural communities, seniors, and others who have been underserved.

Most people do not know the stress of having to choose between buying groceries and paying the rent. The members of ROC have known this reality and take into account the lived experiences of low-income individuals who need more resources to thrive and stay in safe, stable, affordable housing. This bill is for them and SB603 will provide data to demonstrate the equitable solutions that result from programs like this.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Reyna Gillet
Lead Housing Justice Organizer
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC)