

Testimony

April 12, 2023
Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Re: In support of SB 976
Donna L Cohen, Portland, Oregon.

Senator Meek and members of the committee:

Having grown up and spent most of my life living in apartments, I was finally able to buy my first home 20 years ago with the help of a first-time homeowner program. The benefits provided – low initial price, closing costs covered and a 10-year tax abatement – made all the difference [the MID made no difference in my mind; I never gave it a thought].

Owning this home radically changed my life for the better. Apartments work well for many. However, for myself, I needed a small house where I could fix and build things, and do yard work. These are my hobbies, and much of my exercise! Because I was not in great physical condition at the time I purchased, and not being young, I quickly discovered my ability to do my hobbies was limited. But I wanted to BE fit so I took exercise classes and I am active and healthy now!

If I were still renting, I don't even like to imagine what my life would be like. But I know I would not be as healthy, happy or productive. I am thankful every single day for my little house!

Because of my home, I have financial stability. And, because of that, as a semi-retired person, I have time to invest in my community and so I have been involved and been instrumental in some wonderful neighborhood changes. The investment the government made to allow me to buy a home has been returned manyfold in the time and skills I have provided to my community.

Research shows the mortgage interest deduction does not increase homeownership. It does, however, increase the price of housing as those – especially in upper income brackets - may figure in the deduction to what they are willing to pay for a home.

Please move this bill ahead with a "do pass" recommendation for the many others who need help with becoming a homeowner or need housing help of other types.

The bottom line is, should the state of Oregon be providing a housing subsidy for second houses or to families with incomes above \$250,000 while most lower income families have no government housing subsidy and homeownership is increasingly beyond their reach? The answer is obvious.

Please see chart below:

