



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs

Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I am Liz Fouther-Branch, a retired educator who has dedicated much of her life to caring for our community in the forms of consulting on arts education programming and development, social justice, capacity building, advocacy, and more. I am also a Commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs.

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) serves the people of Oregon to empower and support the African American and Black communities through our special roles as policy advisors to Oregon state policy makers and leaders. OCBA is a catalyst that empowers partnerships between state government and our community in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all African American and Black Oregonians by addressing longstanding and emerging issues at the policy level including but not limited to social, political, legal, and economic equity. OCBA has several statutory duties, all of which revolve around advocacy and equity.

I am writing to support Commissioner Angela Rico from the Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW).

Data has shown that housing stability is mandatory for those transitioning from abusive relationships and unstable living conditions. It can take years for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their families to feel safe. The data is precise; housing stability reinforces the survivor's ability to heal and move forward.

I am reminded of how a cousin of mine stayed in an abusive relationship for too long just to keep her two young children in a stable environment. When the abuse became too great, she moved back home with her mother. Her spouse continued to follow her, and she could not find any relief. Her mother called me to see if I could take her in and let me know that she was on her way to Oregon from Minnesota. I was one of the few relatives her spouse didn't know. To make a long story short, my cousin had to leave the state she was born in and all of her immediate family in order to stay safe. I was unable to give her shelter support, childcare, but did help with food assistance and clothing and I thank God, I knew about Bradley Angle House via a friend that worked there.

Many social safety-net programs like Bradley Angle House, were receiving more and more cuts every funding cycle. Even during times of economic growth in the state. Currently inflation and environmental factors are curtailing the type of resources required to avoid homelessness, personal safety, and food insecurity for survivors and their children. We must eliminate barriers to finding shelter for victims and their families. We must do better!

**Oregon Commission on
Black Affairs**

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It's past time to pass legislation like HB 3018, which would provide this critical housing assistance support for victims.

I thank the committee for their consideration,



Liz Fouther-Branch



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