

February 25, 2025

Re: Support for creating a statewide shelter program (HB 3644)

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

On behalf of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), we are pleased to submit testimony in support of HB 3644 to establish a statewide shelter program through which regional coordinators will be selected to administer funding to shelter providers.

The mission of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) is to break the isolation of domestic and sexual violence. Incorporated in 1985 as Clackamas County's first domestic violence shelter, CWS is a community-based organization providing comprehensive, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services to survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, elder and vulnerable adult abuse, human trafficking, exploitation, and stalking. The people we serve come from both rural and urban communities. Annually, we provide over 11,000 nights of shelter.

Housing is the top need for people who are fleeing domestic and sexual violence. Survivors often face episodes of homelessness due to the violence, safety issues, and/or isolation caused by the abuser. They often have few or no resources available when fleeing.

A recent [investigative report](#) found that of 150 people surveyed around the Pacific Northwest, 67% said domestic violence caused homelessness at some point in their lives, and 49% said it caused their current situation.

We are grateful for the leadership of Governor Kotek, Matthew Tschabold, and Chair Marsh for their efforts in bringing together a diverse coalition of stakeholders from around the state to create a comprehensive, sustainable solution to our growing housing crisis.

As a participant in the Shelter Framework Workgroup, I am encouraged by the thoughtful collaboration that resulted in an emphasis on regional coordination. This bill is the outcome of a process that included representation across sectors to create a statewide coordinated emergency shelter policy that identifies what will be funded, how it will be funded, and the data needed to demonstrate intended impact.

In Clackamas County, we have built collaborations with law enforcement, healthcare providers, schools, the criminal justice system, social services agencies, and many other community partners. Together, we offer critical support for survivors navigating housing insecurity and homelessness.

This bill prioritizes regional coordination, which will allow communities the flexibility to design solutions tailored to their unique needs while ensuring that services are delivered efficiently and equitably across the state. Additionally, statewide coordination will help elevate best practices,

sharing what works so that communities around the state may benefit if these approaches fit the needs of their community.

For the above reasons, we urge you to pass HB 3644 to facilitate local solutions which will be critical to move us forward in our efforts to decrease homelessness. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Melissa Erlbaum".

Melissa Erlbaum
Executive Director