



Smart policies for today's families.

February 10th, 2021

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the House Housing Committee,

Family Forward Oregon strongly supports HB 2842 to create a Healthy Homes program. As members of the Fair Shot For All Coalition we support this policy as part of the 2021 legislative agenda and the ongoing work for environmental and racial justice in Oregon. Family Forward Oregon is committed to advancing policies that support families and help them succeed, both in the workplace and at home. Our mission is to create a family-friendly Oregon in which all families can be economically secure and safe. We believe that having a stable home is a critical component of every family's success – it impacts a family's safety and security, their children's educational outcomes, and contributes to economic stability for the entire family.

The need for healthy housing is more crucial than ever as Oregon experiences increasingly dangerous wildfire seasons and navigates a respiratory pandemic. Yet 54% of Oregonians live in housing built before 1978 that is energy-inefficient and in need of repairs, weatherproofing, and upgrades for disaster resiliency. Families that identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or people of color are some of the most impacted due to decades of redlining and other discriminatory practices. For instance, 67.7% of Black Oregonians rent their homes compared to 34.8% of White Oregonians¹.

Additionally, Oregon women have the second highest rate of asset poverty in the nation, meaning they do not have sufficient savings for unexpected expenses, impacting their ability to maintain or find housing when faced with emergencies. In fact, 51% of Oregon women are cost burdened by housing expenses.² Improving housing quality in Oregon will allow women and mothers to save money for critical needs like retirement and future housing, and support their families to thrive.

HB 2842 creates a Healthy Homes program within the Oregon Health Authority. OHA will provide financial assistance to those in low income households to repair and

¹ <https://ulpdx.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/State-Of-Black-Oregon-2015.pdf>

² <https://womensfoundationoforegon.org/pdf/CountHerInreport.pdf>

rehabilitate their residences, and to landlords to repair and rehabilitate dwelling units. Creating and funding a Healthy Homes program creates more equity for our communities and makes fiscal sense for our state. HB 2842 will:

- Help low-income families spend less money on heating and cooling;
- Create good local jobs in retrofitting and repairs;
- Provide a refuge from increasingly bad outdoor air quality;
- Reduce burden on hospitals and families by supporting better respiratory health;
- Reduce the number of sick days for both adults and kids.

Please vote yes on HB 2842 to ensure that all families in Oregon live in a home that is healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Lisa Kwon, Policy Manager
Family Forward Oregon