

# OREGON COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

**February 4, 2019**  
**Senate Housing Committee**  
**Testimony in Support of SB 608**

The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) works with and on behalf of the 33 local public health authorities in Oregon who work to protect the public's health, promote wellness and prevent the spread of disease. Across Oregon, communities are feeling the impacts of the housing crisis, and renters are disproportionately impacted. Since housing is a core determinant of health, CLHO supports SB 608.

Everyone in Oregon should have the opportunity to live in a healthy, stable and affordable home, yet half of Oregon renters are considered cost-burdened, which means they spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities. Renting also makes people particularly vulnerable to rent increases and displacement. Certain communities are disproportionately impacted; only 37% of white Oregonians rent compared to 70% of African Americans and 58% of Hispanics and Native Americans.

Affordable and stable housing provides more than just a safe shelter; it also provides a healthy place for our children to learn and play. Children in low-income families that are not cost-burdened by housing perform significantly better on math and reading, earn higher incomes as adults, and have a lower probability of being incarcerated as young adults than children in low-income families that are cost-burdened by housing. One study, on Housing affordability and children's well-being<sup>1</sup> found that low-income families with difficulty paying their bills were less likely to seek treatment and more likely to use the emergency room. Oregonians need stable, affordable places to live to ensure resources and capacity to take care of their health.

SB 608 limits annual rent increases in a predictable way that benefits both landlords and tenants while also creating reasonable eviction standards. Healthy affordable housing plays an important role in community well-being. SB 608 will put fair rental protections in place for that will help sustain a fair and healthy Oregon.

Respectfully,

Morgan D. Cowling, MPA  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Local Health Officials

<sup>1</sup> **Housing affordability and children's well-being: Evidence from the national survey of America's families**



For more information please contact Morgan Cowling, Executive Director  
morgan@oregonclho.org | 503-329-6923 | oregonclho.org

