



February 18, 2019

TO: Representative Alisa Keny-Guyer, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: Support for SB 608

Thank you for hearing SB 608, a bill that directly addresses the housing insecurity experienced by so many Oregonians during this period of population increase and housing scarcity.

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is the Protection and Advocacy program for Oregonians with disabilities. DRO provides legally-based advocacy services across the state in order to promote Opportunity, Access and Choice for our community.

The difficulty to finding and maintaining affordable, accessible housing has been an ongoing challenge for Oregonians with disabilities. People at all income levels have difficulty in finding physically-accessible housing. For those who have lower incomes or who rely upon income-support programs, locating and maintaining any housing has become increasingly challenging. If a person has physical limitations, equipping a housing unit with accessible features such as a ramp or grip bars must be paid for by the tenant and must be removed from the unit by the tenant when they vacate. The cost of both installation and removal multiplies the costs of moving into and out of housing for a person who needs these modifications.

Oregon has followed, and in many cases lead, national trends to support people in their homes rather than rely upon institutional-based care such as nursing homes, residential facilities and state hospitals. This is a less expensive and more desired level of services for most recipients of public and private supports. This model of service relies upon the ability of seniors and people with disabilities to find and maintain housing. Achieving this has become more difficult due to Oregon's housing crisis, creating back-up in discharging people from higher levels of care which are more expensive and less clinically-appropriate. In the worst cases, the result is houselessness and jailing for nuisance offenses.

SB 608 will allow tenants to have more security in their housing. It is a step that will help Oregonians with disabilities to find and maintain a place to live and, for some, avoid more restrictive and expensive alternatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 608.