

To: 2017 Oregon Legislature
From: Multnomah County Senior Advisory Council
Bobbi Yambasu, Chair

Re: HB 2004 A

The Multnomah County Senior Advisory Council (MCSAC) advises DHS, Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services (ADVS) on services, programs and policies inclusive of healthy aging and population health issues related to seniors and disabled adults. In addition, we advocate at all levels of government on issues related to seniors.

We request that the Oregon Legislature support HB 2004 A, which is legislation critical to the health and well-being of “all” aging adults in our communities.

Housing, specifically lack of appropriate housing, causes poverty. Housing has health consequences; disruptions in housing stability, safety, affordability and accessibility can have lifelong consequences for older adults, interfering with their capacity to manage chronic conditions and to recover from acute health crises.

Rent increases can mean cutting down on other necessities, such as food and medicine. The average social security benefit in Oregon is \$1250 per month and is the sole source of income for 3 out of 10 older Oregonians. This makes finding and retaining an affordable home a tremendous challenge. Displacement caused by escalating rent often leads to homelessness or placement in a nursing facility – at a much higher cost to the state.

Homelessness has a public cost. When revenues and resources are diverted from supporting our schools, maintaining roads and bridges and providing for public safety and transportation, we all pay the price.

Communities deserve the tools to protect and provide for the housing needs of a diverse society. Removing the ban on rent stabilization approaches gives local governments a tool to apply some measure of resilience into protecting housing resources for their most vulnerable residents. Modified no cause eviction policies will give those tenants who are more responsible but less resourceful a chance for stable housing.

We join AARP Oregon and dozens of other stakeholder organizations and advocates in asking you to take decisive action by supporting HB 2004 A. Join us in making a statement and helping those aging adults whose economic stability is burdened by the cost of housing.