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AARP Oregon Testimony in Support of HB 2001 – Missing Middle Housing

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Housing, Rep. Keny-Guyer, Chair

FROM: Jon Bartholomew, Government Relations Director, AARP Oregon

February 11, 2019

AARP is pleased to endorse HB 2001 and urges strong support of the bill to expand housing options for more Oregonians by requiring cities with population greater than 10,000 and counties with population greater than 15,000 to allow middle housing in lands zoned for single-family dwellings within urban growth.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social change organization with a nationwide membership of nearly 38 million and 510,000 in Oregon. We work to improve quality of life for all as we age, strengthen our communities, and fight for the issues that matter to Oregon families. An important aspect of our work in Oregon is advocating for livable and age-friendly communities, including expanding housing options and ensuring access to affordable, safe, secure, and accessible homes for Oregonians of all ages and abilities.

Research shows that between 50 and 60 percent of adults ages 18-49 want to remain in their communities and homes as they age, while nearly 80 percent of adults age 50 and older indicate this same desire. Adults living alone account for 28 percent of U.S. households and this phenomenon is growing across all ages and incomes. We also know that Boomer and Millennials have similar preferences for walkable, mixed use neighborhoods, with a mix of varied types of homes and access to amenities and transportation options. However, our communities today lack the affordable, accessible, and varied housing options needed to meet people's preferences, our changing demographics, and economic realities.

According to the Census by 2030, 1 in 5 people in the United States will be age 65 or over and Oregon is among states with the fastest growing 65+ populations in the West. A high percentage of older Oregonians, both renters and homeowners, are housing cost burdened and this burden increases with age. Today an older adult looking to downsize is going to face a tough challenge finding an affordable home in her own neighborhood whether she is looking to rent or own.

The homogeneity of the type of housing we currently allow in our neighborhoods is in sharp contrast to the increasing diversity of our households, the changing housing preferences and needs as a result of the aging of our populations. Duplexes, triplexes, cottage clusters, and

Real Possibilities

other middle housing, can offer the needed smaller space, more affordable options in our existing neighborhoods.

Oregon needs many solutions to address the housing crisis at hand, but one critical solution can be to simply allow more varied housing types in our neighborhoods. *[Making Room: Housing for a Changing America](#)*, a publication released last week by AARP Foundation and the National Building Museum, points to zoning as one of the most powerful tool a community has in terms of decisions about what gets built, and where. We could not agree more.

AARP support the goals of expanding housing choice in terms of size and types of homes, encouraging walkable communities so people have easier access to amenities, services and supports, and prioritizing the preservation of neighborhood character and existing homes.

HB 2001 is a great start towards these goals. It is imperative that we take immediate bold steps that address the housing crisis here in our state while also creating long term housing opportunity in our communities to keep up with the changing needs of our communities. On behalf of over half million AARP members ages 50+ statewide, we urge you to support HB 2001.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to make our region an age-friendly and livable place for people of all ages and abilities.

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- <https://www.aarp.org/research/topics/community/info-2018/2018-home-community-preference.html>
 - <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2018/making-room-housing-for-a-changing-america.html>
 - <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/housing-americas-older-adults-2018>