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CONTACT: Amanda Kraus, 503-986-1074

Amanda.Kraus@oregonlegislature.gov

Emily Mooney, 503-986-1710

Emily.Mooney@oregonlegislature.gov

Senator Patterson Passes “Domicile Unknown” Bill

SALEM – Senate Bill 850 passed the Oregon State Senate today near-unanimous support. Senator Deb Patterson (D-Salem) sponsored this bill to ensure that the state tracks the deaths of unhoused Oregonians.

“For the sake of those living and dying on our streets, we must accurately track data around the deaths of our houseless neighbors. A collective desire exists to address Oregon’s houseless crisis and provide shelter and care to our most vulnerable community members,” said Senator Patterson, who chairs the Senate Committee on Health Care.

Senate Bill 850 requires an unhoused person’s residence be marked “Domicile Unknown” at their time of death, allowing the state to better track information about all who call Oregonians home.

“By tracking this data, we can learn if the steps we are taking are working and we can prevent complacency. We cannot allow this crisis to feel normal or okay. We must remain vigilant and ready to act,” said Senator Patterson. “Most importantly, we must provide some humanity and dignity in death. By tracking the data we can learn about their full lives, we can become informed about their challenges, and honor the pain and grief of their loved ones.”

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury spoke in support of the bill at a public hearing. Multnomah County has produced an annual report entitled “[Domicile Unknown](#)” since 2011. That report reveals important demographic and statistical information, shares the stories of our neighbors and informs needed policy changes.

“Incredible advocates strive to support our vulnerable community members and I thank them for supporting this bill. This is indeed a somber piece of legislation, and it’s an important one. I’m hopeful it will inform future good work to prevent unnecessary death,” add Senator Patterson.

Senate Bill 850 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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