

Remarks before the Community Development Network Banquet

October 25, 2007

It is an honor to accept this Industry Partner award. I am deeply touched.

Many of you know that I am a product of affordable housing. My single Mom raised four wily and independent kids while she attended college with the help of affordable housing programs and other public benefit programs we were fortunate enough to access.

Without this assistance, I wouldn't be here today.

But my support for funding affordable housing programs is about more than honoring my roots.

It is about our duty to see that seniors and people with disabilities get a safe place to live. Supporting affordable housing is about giving our children the opportunity to better themselves with the help of stable, decent homes.

It is about ending the institution of homelessness as we know it. It is about creating vibrant neighborhoods, with places for any family to establish roots and give back to their community.

We know that today, more than one third of Portland families are living off working poor wages. We know that today many of our families are priced out of the current housing and rental market and their very own neighborhoods.

We know that we are not creating enough family wage jobs, and coordinating our workforce development efforts enough.

We know that the best measure of success for any family is the pride of self-sufficiency and the ability to provide for their children.

But, in Portland, there are hundreds of people, many of whom are in this room, whose dedication to making Portland a better place for everyone has meant continued success in policy, programs and projects that create opportunities for Portlanders to succeed.

The coalitions you have built throughout the region and the state have produced some of the most effective advocacy I have seen in my 23 years of public service.

Heck, it's worked on me!

Tonight, I share this award with all of you. I am no more an industry leader than I am in your service. What you do everyday is to be commended, honored and celebrated.

Thank you.