

TO: Senate Committee on Housing and Development  
FROM: Leann Knapp, Oregon Food Bank  
RE: **Support SB 282 to Fight the Housing & Hunger Crisis**  
DATE: March 4, 2021



Chair Jama, Vice Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Leann Knapp (she/her) and I am here today representing the Oregon Food Bank. Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 11 Oregonians were food insecure. **In 2020, 1 in 4 of our neighbors faced hunger**<sup>1</sup> – a dramatic increase driven by the public health and economic fallout of COVID-19. These increases make it more important than ever that this Legislative Session we pass policies that will support our communities in emerging stronger from this crisis.

Over the last year, the links between hunger and housing have become clearer than ever. Oregonians who are renters are 10 times more likely than homeowners to experience hunger<sup>2</sup> and in 2020, a staggering **53% of renters cut back on food and medications to pay rent**.<sup>3</sup>

Oregon's statewide eviction moratorium has been one of our most successful tools to keep people in their homes. But our work isn't over: **34.8% of all Oregon tenants now owe back rent**, with 56% of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) tenants owing back rent<sup>4</sup>.

**Oregon's economic divide is deepening, and communities who are already more likely to experience hunger are bearing the brunt.** When the eviction moratorium ends in July, families who are already struggling to put food on the table will owe all of their back rent, plus the current month's rent from that day forward. Such a sharp drop-off stands to substantially increase homelessness and hunger in every corner of Oregon. Not to mention the long-lasting consequences tenants could face on their credit scores or ability to find housing into the future if we don't act now.

Our communities are living through one of the worst public health and economic crises in generations, and we need bold action from elected leaders to keep Oregonians housed. **Oregon Food Bank strongly urges your support for Senate Bill 282-1.** We believe this piece of legislation is a critical next step in preventing hunger and ensuring our full communities can begin to recover from this crisis as we move forward.

We thank you for your dedication and your willingness to join Oregon Food Bank in building communities that never go hungry.

<sup>1</sup><https://today.oregonstate.edu/news/new-osu-report-shows-about-25-oregonians-experienced-food-insecurity-2020>

<sup>2</sup>[https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon\\_food\\_insecurity\\_rates\\_by\\_demographic\\_groups\\_2017-2019.pdf](https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_by_demographic_groups_2017-2019.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/oregon-renters-report>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/oregon-renters-report>

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