

Oregon State Legislature  
Joint Ways and Means Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, Rayfield and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ruth Berkowitz and I live in Hood River. I am a mediator and on the board of our local community mediation center, Six Rivers. I respectfully request that you support investing in the Eviction Avoidance Mediation programs.

Mediation, as opposed to litigation, is often the best way to solve problems. As you know, the pandemic has not only killed thousands of people, but also raised our unemployment which means many people don't have the money to pay rent. This poses problems for both the landlord and the tenants and ultimately the success of our community. Being able to discuss the issues and come up with a creative solution is the best alternative to clogging our courts.

The earlier we can bring those at-risk of eviction to a conversation with their housing provider, the more likely that the housing provider will get financial stability, and the more likely a tenant can achieve housing stability.

Your commitment to resources to protect vulnerable community members from unnecessary eviction may determine the amount of strain the impact of Covid-19 has on our community members as well as our communities' homelessness resources.

Please prioritize funding mediation as a tool for eviction prevention. Thank you for serving our community.

Sincerely,

Ruth Berkowitz  
Hood River, Oregon

