



April 27, 2021

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan, and members of the committee,

We at Basic Rights Oregon are writing in support of SB 282-A which will provide much-needed tenant COVID protections. We advocate for LGBTQ people throughout Oregon, and this bill is so vital for our community.

Passing SB 282-A is important to avoid a wave of displacement and homelessness in our state that would have a devastating impact on families and individuals, particularly on our Black and Brown LGBTQ community members who are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from COVID evictions.

Discriminatory housing policies have made homeownership difficult and inaccessible, leaving people of color at greater risk of rental evictions even as higher rates of COVID exposure are leaving people ill and economically stressed. For example, according to the U.S. Census Pulse Survey, 30% of Black renters are at risk of eviction because of concerns they can't pay next month's rent.

Additionally, our transgender community members are at heightened risk of homelessness, as the National Center for Transgender Equality reports that 1 in 5 trans people have experienced homelessness at some point in their life.<sup>1</sup> And that figure is from before the pandemic. By taking up SB 282-A, we can ensure that our transgender loved ones and neighbors are safe.

The eviction moratorium was essential in helping renters stay safe and stable in their homes, but we need more time to help people pay thousands of dollars in back rent or to apply for rental assistance. That's why SB 282-A is necessary; it ensures that tenants and landlords can avail themselves of the

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Transgender Equality, <https://transequality.org/issues/housing-homelessness>

rent assistance available, and protects against an eviction cliff in July by extending the grace period for repayment of back rent until February 2022.

Additionally, once the moratorium ends, some tenants who cannot pay current rent will face non-payment evictions. The impact of an eviction record can have lasting devastation on a person's access to credit, access to housing, and more. To prevent the COVID pandemic from having lasting housing impacts, the bill will prohibit landlords from considering FEDs from the COVID period (April 2020 – February 2022) when screening applicants, and allow tenants to request court sealing of those records.

As we move into the next stage of the COVID pandemic, we must acknowledge the ongoing difficulty that continues to face our most vulnerable communities, particularly Black and Brown LGBTQ people. We must act to ensure that the fallout from the COVID pandemic does not sentence Oregonians who rent their homes to lasting consequences. We urge you to pass SB 282-A.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.