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1274 5th St # 1A & 1B, Woodburn, OR 97071

June 8, 2021

Oregon State Legislature  
House Committee on Rules  
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Senate Bill 291 – Racial Justice Council’s Individualized Assessment Housing bill**

Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chair’s Drazan and Holvey, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written support for the RJC’s housing bill - SB 291. On behalf of the Farmworker Housing Dev. Corporation and Evolve Workforce & Housing Training, I would like to request your support to the Senate Bill 291.

Both FHDC as owner and Evolve Property Management as an operator of affordable housing for low-income families with an emphasis on BIPOC individuals and communities, have long ago implemented a series of strategies to dismantle the multiple barriers that immigrants and people of color face when either trying to rent or buy a home.

All Oregonians deserve a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. FHDC and Evolve believe that SB 291 helps remove barriers to housing stability for Oregonians with a criminal history. Too often for rental housing, current law allows applications to be denied based on criminal history. We know by experience that criminal history is not an indicator of a good tenancy, in fact, housing instability is a predictor of re-offense.

The bill allows landlords to review the circumstances of individual’s previous involvement with the criminal justice system and whether an applicant’s history is relevant to their ability to be a good tenant. It is vital to reduce barriers to housing and ensure greater housing opportunities for all members of our communities. Housing after incarceration supports people to keep their jobs, keep their children in school and reconnect with their families.

Finally, the bill allows flexibility to utilize the U.S. Housing & Urban Development (HUD) guidance to provide training and technical assistance to landlords without putting it in statute as we expect guidance will be updated as work on individualized assessments continues.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to ensuring safety and opportunity of stable housing for all Oregonians. We look forward to working with you as this policy continues to move forward in the process.

Please vote AYE for SB 291.

Sincerely,

Maria Elena Guerra (Meg) | Executive Director  
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