

Submitter: Patricia Byrum

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB799

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Patricia Byrum and I live in Keizer. I am an Oregon renter here to testify in favor of SB 799 because evictions must be rare and they must be fair.

I have a Bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science and a Master's Degree in Psychology. I got my bachelor's degree while experiencing homelessness with three children in tow. I am testifying today because this is incredibly important, but I do so despite the fact that if the property management company for the unit I live in finds out about this testimony I almost certainly will face retaliatory actions. You might not see many tenants in this room today and the fear of retaliation is a big part of why.

In February 2018, my landlord and management company entered my property illegally and then sent me an eviction notice the following month because of the arrangement of my furniture. I hastily rearranged my furniture and the notice was rescinded.

This was just the first notice I received from my landlord and was actually the simplest. The notices I've received since have been so convoluted that even with two advanced degrees I was unable to parse out not only what the notice was for but also what my next steps were. I needed time. I needed time to contact legal aid services and remedy the situation. With two advanced degrees, but no law degree, I needed time to translate the legalese sent to me into something digestible. Despite the fact that only Salem Housing Authority can revoke my Section 8 housing, this notice plainly threatened my subsidy. I should note that the latest notice was dated January 9th of this year but was not posted on my door until January 11th with a due date of January 12th. I had to sign this paperwork to avoid eviction without understanding what it said because not only did I have a short period of time to respond, that time was cut even shorter by the property manager's actions.

Previous notices have also been pre-dated and used language indicating that it was a third or fourth attempt to reach me when I had not been contacted by any means until the notice was posted to my door. Short windows for responses have been used to rush tenants into decisions that impact the roofs over our heads.

I am not alone. Tenants like me need SB 799 to give us time. We need these protections. I have experienced homelessness and I am not alone. The time frames tenants have now to respond to eviction notices are unreasonable. Please support SB 799.

Thank you again for hearing this important bill and allowing us to speak. I hope you will listen to people like me and vote yes on SB 799 and the Homelessness Prevention Package.