

ROGUE ACTION CENTER

Rogue Action Center
P.O. Box 674, Talent, OR, 97540

Re: Support for SB 799 to reduce evictions and prevent homelessness

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

January 27th, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in regards to this important bill. Over the past several years Southern Oregon has experienced intersecting disasters (COVID 19, massive wildfires, inflation) which exacerbated the existing affordable housing crisis. We have witnessed an increased number of evictions in Jackson and Josephine Counties and as a result have seen the number of folks who are living while unhoused continue to grow. While our communities are doing their best to provide services to people who are unhoused and in unstable housing, we know that addressing the root causes of rising homelessness is the only path towards changing the current trajectory.

Reducing evictions is an essential part of our housing and homelessness response. As Gov. Kotek and legislative leadership commit to increasing the housing supply and rehousing our homeless neighbors, we must also ensure that the people who are housed today don't end up on the streets themselves. We know this is true because it is happening today.

Across the state, evictions for non-payment are skyrocketing. From October 2022, when pandemic protections expired, through December 2022, there have been an average of 2,155 court evictions a month, every month. Before the pandemic, the average monthly rate was approximately 1,500 a month. This is a spike of 43%. More than 80% of current eviction filings are because rent was late.

We must make evictions rare and when they do happen, more fair. And during the pandemic, the legislature did exactly that. Thanks to the pandemic protections there were fewer evictions, and fewer people displaced from their homes. It is time to take those lessons learned and apply them to today with SB 799. SB 799 is a fair approach that gives people who are behind on their rent a reasonable amount of time to catch up and, if they need it, locate, apply and receive rent assistance.

It would address the fact that evictions in Oregon are too fast and don't give people a chance to protect their homes. SB 799 would reinstate the increased time between nonpayment notice and eviction court from 72 hours to 10 days to give people time to access assistance, reinstate a safe harbor period of up to 60 days for people who have notified the landlord they have applied for rent assistance so no one is evicted when help is on the way and more

We strongly urge you to pass SB 799 as quickly as possible as part of the Homelessness Prevention Package that includes \$100 million in rent new rent assistance, SB 611 / HB 2733 to limit the exorbitant and abusive rent

increases too many landlords are imposing this year, and the Rental Market Data Bill for greater transparency into this essential component of Oregon's housing availability.

Sincerely,

Dana Greenblatt

Rogue Action Center

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