

FAIRSHOT FOR ALL

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development



The Fair Shot For All Coalition supports SB 799.

In this economy and housing market, tenants are easily pushed into homelessness by skyrocketing rents and costs of living, and limited protections for renters. Early in the pandemic, Oregon passed common-sense solutions to help prevent even more tenants becoming homeless through rental assistance, eviction reforms, and other COVID protections.

And while the COVID-pandemic appears to be easing up, the homelessness crisis is clearly not. We should continue to take significant actions to keep people housed and stabilize our workforce like our lives depend on it.

SB 799 includes important safe harbor and other protections implemented during the pandemic that will be the difference between homelessness, generational poverty, and the safety and wellbeing of Oregonians and their families. Many of these have recently expired or are about to expire; letting these safeguards go would move us in the wrong direction.

SB 799 also includes important new protections that ensure more fairness and less displacement such as ensuring that unjust evictions are expunged and do not lead to further barriers finding housing.

These barriers when added to the historic and ongoing discrimination and economic hardships that BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrants, and low-income Oregonians face become a matter of racial, gender, and economic justice. Consider the history of discrimination in housing.

HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING

The housing challenges we face today are exacerbated by a history of discriminatory policy decisions and business practices over the last century that limited where people of color, especially Black Oregonians, could live and buy property. When African Americans moved to Portland to take jobs in the shipyards during World War II, the combined actions of government officials, real estate agents, and bankers pushed Black, Native and Asian families into specific areas of North and Northeast Portland:

- Banks, enabled by maps drawn by the federal government, refused to make home loans in Black neighborhoods.

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- Real estate agents refused to sell homes in White neighborhoods to Black families.
- Appraisers artificially devalued the area's housing stock, limiting the ability of Black families who did own homes to build wealth.
- City officials changed zoning maps to limit the types of housing available in predominantly White neighborhoods.

We can see the legacy of this racial discrimination today in lower homeownership rates for Black families. Just 32% of African-Americans in Multnomah County owned homes in 2010, compared to 60% of Whites in the county. Furthermore, 69% of African-American renters in Multnomah County were spending more than 30% of their income on housing compared to 50.7% of Whites in 2010 (American Community Survey).

By passing SB 799 we take the immediate action needed to help address the homelessness emergency that we are experiencing and move in the right direction towards a fair shot for all. We urge your YES Vote on SB 799.

