



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Jama
Vice-Chair Anderson
Members of the Senate Housing and Development Committee

FR: Catie Theisen, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: SB 799 Support, Fair Evictions

January 29, 2023

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Safe and stable housing is inextricably linked to the safety and prosperity of workers and their families. It's critical that we address the housing and homelessness crisis with both short and long term solutions. As such, the Homelessness Prevention Package, including SB 799, is essential for the health and well being of all workers by ensuring that the people who are housed today don't end up on the streets tomorrow.

We know that for far too many lower-wage workers, they are just one unforeseen medical bill or rent increase away from being on the brink of homelessness. A minimum wage worker making \$13.50 would need to work 68 hours a week to afford a 1-bedroom rental home at fair-market rate. To afford a 2 bedroom apartment at fair market rate, a worker would need to earn \$27.65 an hour.¹ Consequently, for minimum wage workers or even middle-income earners, not being able to afford rent could be right around the corner. It's no wonder that 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.

This has devastating effects on the economy: when working families become housing-insecure, it has lasting impacts on their industries, their communities, and their families that will likely be felt for generations to come.

Consequently, it's a strategic and moral imperative for Oregon to make evictions rare, and when they do happen, more fair. 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. Extended timelines to apply for and receive rent assistance would allow workers to stay housed and recoup from a sudden expense or unexpected life event.

The threat of homelessness is too close for too many Oregon workers. We look forward to working with the legislature on these immediate solutions to keep people housed, and long-term solutions to increase the supply of affordable housing statewide to support local workforces and the economy at-large. We encourage your support of SB 799.

¹ <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/or>