

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

For the record, I am writing on behalf of Health Care for All Oregon (HCAO). HCAO strongly urges 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. Under today's rapid eviction laws, so many can quickly get pulled under by the rapid wave of eviction court. When tenants get exorbitant rent increases of the kind we are seeing now: 15%, 32%, 50%, they need time to pull together resources. When people on the edge get evicted, it is all too easy to fall into homelessness. It is imperative that Oregon address the exorbitant and abusive rent increases that too many landlords are imposing this year. Preserving housing stability is essential to support and protect Oregonians.

Today, every family entering a new housing development and every person proudly holding a key to their own front door for the first time in years, is at risk of being a few dollars short on rent and losing everything to eviction. According to the state economist, more than 50% of Oregon renters do not have enough money left over for food, medicine, basic necessities. We must ensure that the people who are housed today don't end up on the streets themselves.

What are the impacts of going from being housed into unhoused? Housing instability and homelessness increases the risk of experiencing violence and abuse. Domestic violence survivors entering shelters overwhelmingly identified "finding housing I can afford" as a need. Survivors establishing safe homes for themselves, and their families are often rent-burdened, and one unexpected debt or rent increase can cause possible homelessness. Families at risk need time to access rent assistance and services so they don't face displacement and danger.

Evictions also harm the unborn give them disadvantages that last a lifetime. According to a 2021 study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association on evictions of pregnant women, eviction during pregnancy, particularly during the second and third trimester, showed an association with lower birth rates and gestational age. These findings suggest that eviction actions during pregnancy are associated with adverse birth outcomes, which have lifelong and multigenerational consequences.

The tragedy of an eviction leads to overall life instability: children can lose connection to school, those employed can lose their employment, and access to health care becomes more complicated in an already too complex system resulting in a steady spiral of worsening physical and mental health.

As Oregon commits to increasing the housing supply and rehousing our homeless neighbors, reducing evictions is an essential part of our housing and homelessness response and addressing so many of the related consequences.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service. We urge you to support SB 799.

Sincerely,

Zainab Alidina on behalf of Health Care for All Oregon (HCAO)