

Submitter: Hai-Lea Eads

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB799

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Hai-Lea Eads and I live in Eugene. I'm writing to testify in support of SB 799 because the system right now moves way too fast and is very unfair to tenants. It's just a pipeline of new homelessness waiting to happen. I was evicted last month because my roommate abandoned her lease and left me to pay the whole bill. I fought very hard to try and keep my home, and stability. I was upfront and honest about my situation with my leasing office and thought I was going to work something out with them, but they started the eviction process, anyway. After being sent in circles or simply turned away by many "resources" I was lucky to finally connect with a rent assistance agency that could help me, but my landlord refused to work with them and take the money. Rent assistance was going to pay my balance plus three months' future rent, with only six months left in my lease this would have given me more than enough time to come up with rent for the remainder of my living there. They still wouldn't take the money and I had no choice but to sign a moveout agreement.

I am currently couch surfing. Staying in one friend's home for a week or so at a time and then moving on to another. Hoping I don't overstay my welcome and trying not to up root their daily lives. Do you know what it feels like to have your privacy stripped away from you? Do you know how it feels to be choking back tears all day long but only feeling as though you can cry in your car? My car is my only "safe space" or form of privacy that I am allowed these days. Regardless of the fact that my case was dismissed and the eviction is not on my record, it's hard to explain why I left my previous residency without seeming at fault. And when I asked my leasing office if I were to get evicted if they could explain the situation on my behalf I was told, "We have to keep things factual." Well the fact of the matter is my leasing office didn't accept the rental assistance I qualified for simply because they didn't have to. That's it. Imagine looking someone in the face and telling them you don't care if they end up on the streets. And to be quite honest if I wasn't completely vulnerable and lucky with the friends I've made here that's exactly where I would be. The homelessness in this town is directly tied to the housing crisis. While I'm fully aware that not every homeless person is in their position because of this it would be idiotic to ignore the correlation.

If this bill were in place when I needed it last month, I would still be in my home. I hope you will listen to people like me and vote yes on SB 799.

Thank you.

Hai-Lea Eads