



January 30, 2023

Senate Committee on Housing & Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Loren Naldoza and I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our strong support for **SB 799**, which would make necessary changes to current renter protections in the State of Oregon.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of one hundred organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state. We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

As you know, in the earlier days of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Oregon Legislature made much-needed changes to reduce evictions and keep people in their homes. We appreciated the Legislature's strong commitment to prioritizing the prevention of homelessness, though in October 2022, these same protections unfortunately expired.

The devastating result of allowing these protections to expire are readily ascertainable. This Committee heard in Legislative Days last month that, for the month of October 2022, there were 2,347 evictions in that month alone.¹ This represents a 207% increase from October 2021, and through the end of the year, there have been an average of 2,155 evictions per month. When safe harbor and tenant protections were in place, along with robust rent assistance, not only were there fewer eviction cases, but more cases were resolved successfully. This means that more landlords got paid and more tenants were able to keep their homes.² Granting these protections also stands to better protect tenants of color, including Black renters, who currently are 2.4 times more likely to have an eviction filed against them than white renters.³

¹ Oregon Law Center. *Oregon Eviction Filings Data*, Dec. 2022, available at:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/202111/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/258084>

² *Id.*

³ American Civil Liberties Union, *Clearing the Record: How Eviction Sealing Laws Can Advance Housing Access for Women of Color*, Jan. 10, 2020, available at <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/clearing-the-record-how-eviction-sealing-laws-can-advance-housing-access-for-women-of-color>.

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SB 799 revives these now-expired protections to prevent avoidable evictions and to keep people stably housed. Among other things, the bill specifically expands the time between [1] a tenant receives a written notice of nonpayment and [2] the termination of that rental agreement from 72 hours, back to 10 days as it was previously allowed during the pandemic.

Thousands of families across this state are experiencing a housing crisis, evidenced by data from the Eviction Defense Project; what stands between these families and financial ruin and homelessness is a system that would allow a reasonable amount of time for a tenant to assess their options and make a decision that works best for that tenant. The protections outlined in SB 799 provides this system, and would be a step in the right direction towards greater housing stability in this state.

The Oregon Housing Alliance urges your strong support of SB 799.

Sincerely,

Loren Naldoza
Oregon Housing Alliance

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