

To: Senate Housing & Development Committee
From: Dana Hepper, Director of Policy & Advocacy, Children's Institute
Date: Monday, January 30, 2023
Re: Support for Senate Bill 799

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today in support of SB 799 to reduce evictions and prevent homelessness. My name is Dana Hepper and I am the Director of Policy & Advocacy at the Children's Institute. Our vision is an Oregon where all children have the love, care, and education they need.

The [US Department of Education](#) estimates that Oregon had **more than 21,000 children under age 6 experiencing homelessness** (2018-19). This is approximately 1 out of 13 children in this age range. An estimated 30% of homeless people are families with children. The stress caused by lack of affordable, safe, stable housing can have a negative impact on a child's developing brain, health, and ability to stay with their family ([National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)). This is a crisis needing urgent attention.

Due to systemic underfunding of early childhood programs and interventions, many of these children and their families may not have access to services proven to promote protective factors - such as Early Head Start, Head Start, Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten, Relief Nurseries, home visiting, etc.

Solving child and family homelessness is as complex as it is urgency. Reducing evictions is one essential part of our housing and homelessness response. This comes alongside increasing the housing supply and rehousing our homeless neighbors.

Families with young children are at acute risk for spending more than 30% of their income on rent, as they face the compounding need to either leave a job to care for children or simultaneously pay for child care – which can be as expensive or more expensive than rent. We need to take additional action to support families to stay in their homes, while supporting landlords to receive agreed rent payments.

We support SB 799 because it would:

- Reinstatement of information for families about how to access legal assistance.
- Reinstatement of additional time for families to apply for and secure rent assistance,
 - From 72 hours to 10 days between nonpayment notice and eviction court and
 - A 60-day safe harbor period for families who have applied for rent assistance.

Children need stable, safe housing to thrive. Thank you.