



COMMUNITY LEGAL & EDUCATIONAL ACCESS & REFERRAL CLINIC

January 30, 2023

Re: Support for Senate Bill 799

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

My name is Leni Tupper. I am the founder and Director of the Portland Community College (PCC) CLEAR Clinic, where we provide free limited-scope legal services, including eviction legal defense to Portland residents, and eviction expungements state-wide. This year, the PCC CLEAR Clinic has assisted hundreds of low-income people avoid eviction, remain housed, and remove legal barriers to maintaining safe and secure housing. One of the primary reasons we have been able to provide this meaningful assistance to tenants in Oregon is the tenant protections that the state legislature has put in place to protect our community members from homelessness.

I am writing today to share my enthusiastic support for Senate Bill (SB) 799. This bill continues and expands the tenant protections our most vulnerable communities need so desperately right now, including allowing tenants a ten-day window to pay off their rent after receiving non-payment termination notices, before a landlord can file an eviction in court. The CLEAR Clinic provides eviction legal defense, but when this ten-day protection was removed and changed to a 72-hour window, it significantly decreased our ability to help our clients and community members avoid eviction. Reinstating this protection will help us help our community members avoid eviction. Similarly, the 60-day safe harbor provision in SB 799 will allow our overburdened rent assistance programs the time to provide critical rent assistance to prevent evictions; it also gives tenants a reasonable window to provide documentation of their application to their landlords, to prevent displacement while rent assistance is on the way. From our experience providing eviction legal defense, these and the other benefits of SB 799 are essential to keep our communities housed.

Preventing homelessness should be a top priority for our legislature and all community members. Our entire community suffers when it is not. Reducing evictions is an essential part of our housing and homelessness response. Eviction protections like those found in SB 799 allow our neighbors and friends to maintain safe and secure housing. The data and lived experience of impacted people, including our clients, is clear: evictions disproportionately impact our community members most pushed to the margins, which include people of color, people living with disabilities, and Oregon's immigrant and refugee communities. SB 799 provides a meaningful investment in homelessness prevention and in the welfare of our most marginalized communities.

More than 90% of evictions filed in Portland are for unpaid rent. SB 799 will stop fast-tracked evictions and allow more time for tenants to seek resources and maintain housing. The PCC CLEAR Clinic has provided legal services to hundreds of community members in danger of

eviction, in eviction proceedings, or on the brink of homelessness. We have also connected these clients to critical services that have helped them to remain in their homes, like financial assistance. Unfortunately, evictions for non-payment of rent are skyrocketing. The Legislature took important steps during the pandemic to prevent many Oregonians from losing access to their housing. Now, the Legislature can apply the lessons learned during the pandemic to continue and expand this assistance and support our communities. SB 799 will undoubtedly reduce the number of Oregonians facing eviction, getting evicted, and becoming homeless. As an organization that works directly on these issues, we know this bill will keep some of our most impacted community members housed.

The return on investment from this bill is immeasurable because it is a genuine investment in the safety and security of the people of Oregon. Please join me in supporting our community by increasing access to the desperately needed legal assistance, financial assistance, and tenant protections that SB 799 provides.

Thank you,



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