



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

DATE: February 14th, 2023
TO: Chair Dexter and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
FROM: Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director
Oregon Department of Justice
SUBJECT: HB 2001 and Sections 14-26 concerning residential tenancies

This testimony is presented in support of HB 2001, sections 14-26.

A crucial component of our housing and homelessness response is reducing evictions. In addition to increasing the housing supply and rehousing houseless Oregonians, we also need to ensure that people who currently are housed don't end up on the streets. Sections 14-26 of HB 2001 contain essential and reasonable negotiated improvements to Oregon's eviction statutes, to promote stability and payment rather than displacement and eviction.

Evictions for non-payment have reached unprecedented levels. Each month between when prior protections expired in October 2022 and January 2023, there were an average of 2,178 court evictions. This number represents a 45 percent spike from the average monthly rate before the pandemic, which was approximately 1,500 court evictions a month. Further, more than 86 percent of these eviction filings were because rent was late.

We must reduce eviction rates and ensure that when they do happen, their procedures are fair, and designed to facilitate access to information and assistance that can facilitate payment and prevent displacement. During the past several years this is exactly what the legislature did. The legislature's prior protections reduced eviction rates and protected more people from displacement.

It is time to take those lessons learned and incorporate best practices into our ongoing approach.

HB 2001 Sections 14-26 are reasonable, negotiated, and fair proposals designed to give individuals who have fallen behind on their rent payments a better chance of finding help and connecting to assistance in time to make payments and avoid displacement. While the negotiated compromise deletes the safe harbor pause on eviction proceedings, it retains the provision of translated information about where to find help, the 10-day notice period, the right to redemption, reasonable

protections around entry of default judgments, minor adjustments to the eviction court timeline, and streamlining of the expungement process for qualifying judgments.

This bill will address the reality in Oregon that evictions for nonpayment are too fast, and currently designed to prioritize displacement rather than connection to assistance. We must give people a chance to protect their homes.

Contact:

Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director, 503-931-0418, kimberly.mccullough@doj.state.or.us

Kate Denison, Deputy Legislative Director, 971-599-9851, kate.e.denison@doj.state.or.us