

Submitter: Jessica Altamirano

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB2001

My name is Jessica and I live in Happy Valley, Oregon. I am an Oregon renter submitting testimony in favor of HB 2001 to help people avoid homelessness and give more people who are living unsheltered the opportunity for safe and stable housing.

I am a single person with three pets. I have SNAP benefits. In November, I had a back injury which left me unable to walk on my own until mid January. Due to my back injury, I lost most of my remote clients for my remote contract job, so I became unable to pay rent. The waitlist for all rental assistance was full. We were told by our landlord that October would have been the last month we would have been protected from eviction by the covid memorandum. In November, I received a 72-hour notice of payment. I paid \$950 a month and around \$50 in utilities, and my roommate paid \$930 for rent a month and the same in utilities. When I was finally able to apply for rental assistance, I asked for the full amount of rent but was only given the amount I owed from our rent which then our landlord denied due to being an incomplete payment of rent. My roommate did not submit her portion of rent. I ended up going to court for eviction. We, the tenants, agreed to vacate in order to avoid the eviction on our records. I had nowhere to go because I have no income. I have been applying to jobs for months but there are not many accommodations being made for temporary or permanent disabilities after covid. I could not apply for credit cards because I did not have an income. I have to pay all the back rent from November to December. I am still looking for a place to live and I am still applying to jobs, which now that I do not have a back injury it seems to be an easier process. I'm currently faced with couch surfing homelessness. I went from being comfortable financially to homeless due to an injury. I do not know what I will have to do to have housing again but I honestly would not like for anyone to go through the stress I went through. During COVID, when I first moved in with my roommate, we were able to apply for the Oregon Rental Assistance Program which protected us from eviction when we were both going through financial hardship. The thought of eviction never even crossed our mind. We were able to save a couple months of rent and focus on bills. The two situations are vastly different due to the protections that were in place for tenants and happened within less than a year of each other. The fact that these protections were not up before covid seems unreasonable given the 2008 recession, covid and anything in-between.

Thank you for hearing this important bill and for considering my testimony. I hope you

will listen to people like me and vote yes on HB 2001.