



Date: February 13th, 2023
To: House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
From: Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for the Urban League of Portland
Re: Support of Proposed Amendment to Study Housing, HB 2001

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Urban League of Portland, one of Oregon's oldest civil rights and social service organizations, empowering African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security, and quality of life across Oregon and SW Washington, please accept this testimony in strong support of HB 2001, which is an important element of the response to our housing crisis. The bill ensures a focus on youth homelessness prevention, provides innovative approaches to addressing housing supply barriers, and contains critical measures to help prevent eviction-caused homelessness.

We are particularly writing to urge support of Sections 14-26 of HB 2001, which contain essential and reasonably negotiated improvements to Oregon's eviction statutes to promote stability and payment rather than displacement and eviction. These Sections of the bill:

- Expand the time after a notice of nonpayment before being taken to court from 72 hours to 10 days.
- Provide that nonpayment eviction notices and court forms should include information about where to find rent assistance and legal assistance and provide access to translation of these forms.
- Amend first appearance and trial timelines to ensure that tenants have a greater chance of finding help before their hearing.
- Provide that an eviction case will be dismissed if payment is made before final judgment.
- Make the default judgment process fairer.
- Streamline the eviction sealing process for those who qualify for sealing, removing a procedural barrier to future housing stability.

We can all agree that the city and the state is facing a crisis when it comes to affordable housing. It is an issue not only for those who are low-income, who are cost-burdened, and at risk of losing their homes as housing prices continue to reach record highs, but for those most vulnerable in our communities, the chronically unhoused. According to the "Recommendations of the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities in Oregon" report to the Oregon State Legislature, a task force I currently chair, the data shows that in Oregon, "people who identify as Black or African American are 2% of the total population, 4% of those in poverty, and 6% of those experiencing homelessness. In other words, the percentage of Black people experiencing homelessness is 3 times their share of the total state population.¹" Additionally, we know that evictions and rent hikes create disproportionate harm to BIPOC communities, that Black women in Oregon are twice as likely to face eviction and that BIPOC Oregonians are more likely to be renters because of systemic barriers to housing and employment.

For many, housing in Oregon is too precarious, unaffordable, and many are one life event away from not being able to cover monthly necessities such as rent; we must look at ways to keep

¹ ["Findings and Recommendations of the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities in Oregon", January 2022, Pg. 15.](#)



currently housed Oregonians in their homes in the face of skyrocketing rent. In a most recent report from Forbes Home, which took data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. department of Housing and Urban Development, Oregon ranks ninth highest in the country when it comes to rental prices. For example, rent for a Portland one-bedroom apartment has risen by 34% since last year and taking into “account the average yearly income for Oregon residents, which was just over \$60,000 dollars in 2021, renters are putting 25% of their paychecks toward rent for their apartment or house.”² Couple the exorbitant rents that we’re seeing and the increase of eviction court filings due to non-payment of rent to 68% from last year’s 48% and you have a worsening housing crisis looming.

In closing, passage of HB 2001 will enhance our capacity to respond to youth homelessness, create innovative approaches to addressing housing supply barriers, and provide reasonable and critical measures to help prevent eviction-caused homelessness. The bill is landmark legislation and reflects the urgency of the crisis too many Oregonians are living with due to lack of housing, inadequate services, and eviction statutes designed for displacement instead of stability. Thank you to the legislature and to Gov. Kotek for your fast action on this package to help our communities respond to the crisis of homelessness and to improve stability and safety for individuals and families across the state.

Respectfully,

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² [“Oregon Rent Prices Among the Highest in the Country, Report Finds,” Joe Raineri \(KGW\), January 23, 2023.](#)