

Testimony Submitted by
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Oregon Consumer Justice
To the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

February 14, 2023

Regarding: Support for HB 2001

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

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of Oregon Consumer Justice in support of HB 2001. This bill is a crucial element of the emergency response to our current 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 appreciate the bipartisan and bicameral work that has been done to bring this bill forward.

Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ) advances a justice movement to ensure Oregonians have the freedom to thrive and equitably share in our abundance of resources. For too long, flawed systems and economic policies that favor profits over people have stood in the way of this reality, with communities of color most often experiencing the greatest harm. Strengthened through responsive and reciprocal community relationships, OCJ organizes, advocates, and litigates to put people first. We envision an inclusive future where financial and business transactions can be relied upon as safe and where all Oregonians know and have recourse to exercise their consumer rights.

Renters are consumers within the housing marketplace. The eviction process needs safeguards to ensure that the process is fair. As consumers in the

marketplace, tenants need to be able to access critical information and have adequate time to navigate the system to avoid eviction whenever possible.

Communities already facing historical and systemic barriers to jobs, housing, health care, opportunity, and wealth are paying a steep price for Oregon's unfair and rushed eviction laws. On average, in Oregon and 16 other states, landlords filed evictions against Black women renters at double the rate of or higher than their white renter counterparts, according to the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project and Data Analytics team.

We can make the eviction system more fair and equitable with HB 2001.

HB 2001 contains several important elements that provide a fairer eviction process, including

- Expands the time, from 72 hours to 10 days, following a notice of nonpayment before being taken to court
- Provides that nonpayment eviction notices and court forms include information about where to find rent assistance and legal assistance, and access to translation of these forms
- Amends first appearance and trial timelines to ensure that tenants have a greater chance of finding help before their hearing
- Provides dismissal of an eviction case if payment is made before final judgment
- Makes the default judgment process fairer
- Streamlines the eviction sealing process, for those who qualify for sealing, removing a procedural barrier to future housing stability

Thank you to the legislature and Governor Kotek for your fast action on this package to help our communities respond to the homelessness crisis and to improve stability and safety for individuals and families across the state.

We urge your support of HB 2001 to begin to address our housing crisis, including changes to make our eviction process more fair and equitable. Thank you for your consideration and your service to Oregon's communities.