



February 13, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Housing Committee on Housing and Homelessness
Salem, Oregon

RE: Testimony in Opposition to HB2967

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

My name is Michelle Cantrell, and I am a property manager with experience in tenant placement and rental management. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB2967, which would prohibit residential landlords from charging an application screening fee.

Background screenings are a vital part of the rental application process, ensuring that prospective tenants have a history of responsible tenancy and do not pose a risk to the property or surrounding community. Despite common misconceptions, landlords and property management companies do not profit from application screening fees. These fees strictly cover the cost of background and credit checks, which are conducted by third-party services to expedite the approval process.

Screenings are not free—landlords must pay for credit reports, rental history verification, and criminal background checks, often incurring fees from agencies like the Oregon State Police and local courts for accessing records. As the costs of these services continue to rise, landlords frequently pay out of pocket when multiple applications are required to find a qualified tenant. Absorbing these growing expenses is becoming increasingly difficult, putting financial strain on property owners.

Under this proposed bill, landlords would be required to absorb the cost of screenings, even when multiple applications are necessary to secure a qualified tenant. This places an undue financial strain on property owners, particularly small landlords operating on tight margins. Without the ability to charge an application fee, landlords may be forced to either raise rents to recover these expenses or lower screening standards—both of which pose risks to property owners and tenants alike. Rather than solely impacting new applicants, this policy would unfairly shift the financial burden onto all tenants, including long-term residents who played no role in the application process.

Additionally, allowing applicants to apply without any financial commitment may lead to an influx of non-serious applications, further increasing costs and delays in securing responsible

tenants. A reasonable application screening fee ensures that prospective tenants are serious about their application while helping to cover the necessary expenses of vetting applicants properly.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose HB2967 and consider solutions that balance affordability for tenants with the legitimate costs incurred by property owners in managing safe and reliable housing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Michelle Cantrell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

C. Michelle Cantrell
Property Manager