

SquareOne Villages

Housing reimaged.  *Home starts here.*

February 14, 2025

Chair Pam Marsh

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
Salem, OR

RE: Support for HB 2627

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the committee,

I am writing on behalf of SquareOne Villages—a shelter provider and affordable housing developer in Lane County—in support of HB 2627.

Since 2013, SquareOne Villages has been a shelter provider for adults experiencing homelessness in Eugene. Our primary goal is to help our clients move into more stable housing as quickly as possible. On top of record high rents and record low vacancy rates, one of the most significant barriers our homeless neighbors face in obtaining housing are the screening charges they must pay simply to apply for an apartment. In Lane County, these fees are typically \$50 per person. Sometimes, they are more.

Faced with fierce competition for available apartments, it is not uncommon for our clients to be charged hundreds of dollars just trying to get approved for an apartment. While we are generally able to offer our clients assistance with these charges, as a small non-profit shelter provider with limited resources these fees add up quickly. And despite the protections afforded by our current landlord and tenant statutes (e.g. that screening charges may not be required if no apartments are available, or that screening charges must be refunded if a unit has since been filled), these reasonable rules have proved very difficult to enforce.

HB 2627 is a simple and straightforward way to address these problems, and will make a real difference for our homeless and low-income neighbors who are struggling to find and maintain housing. We urge you to pass HB 2627.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Albanese

Program Director
SquareOne Villages