



February 16, 2025

Oregon State House of Representatives
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

RE: Opposition to HB 2305, 2025 Regular Session

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

I write to urge your opposition to HB 2305; which would put the housing stability of Oregon's most vulnerable families at risk.

Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO) is an Oregon nonprofit dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination in our state. As Legal Director for the Fair Housing Council of Oregon, I have witnessed firsthand how difficult it is for low income families, families with disabilities, and families with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds to establish stable housing in this rental market.

Each year, the Fair Housing Council responds to hundreds of housing consumers facing eviction. Marginalized communities are already disproportionately affected by housing instability and evictions. Farington, Alex *et al.*, *Targeted, Harassed, and Displaced: The Role of Discrimination in Oregon Eviction*, Portland State University (2024). Nationally, Black and Latinx families are more likely to be targeted for serial eviction attempts by the same housing provider than their white counterparts, and women are more likely to be targeted than men. Hepburn, Peter *et al.*, "Racial and Gender Disparities among Evicted Americans", *Sociological Science* (2020). HB 2305 would add to the housing instability experienced by these groups.

The most reported discrimination in Oregon and nationally is discrimination on the basis of a tenant's disability. Nearly 10% of evictions in 2024 were "for-cause" evictions that would count toward the three strikes in this bill. Farington *et al.*, "Statewide: Latest Eviction Data" *Evicted in Oregon* (January 21, 2025). <https://www.evictedinoregon.com/statewide-latest-eviction-data>. Our experience at FHCO indicates that a disproportionate number of these evictions are levelled at tenants with disabilities, often for taking steps to mitigate the impact of their disability on their lives, or for a simple misunderstanding that arises from intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Also commonly reported to FHCO are tenants facing evictions for nonpayment of rent, where the nonpayment is due to an interruption in the tenant's income or complications with their subsidy. Families facing severe financial trouble often receive numerous eviction notices for nonpayment of rent before they reestablish financial stability. Many resources and stop-gaps exist to help families retain housing in the face of financial difficulty, but many of those resources would be rendered pointless under this bill.

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Oregon has spent innumerable dollars and manhours attempting to return housing stability to our communities. HB 2305 would undermine those efforts by creating broad statutory loopholes that would endanger the most vulnerable tenants and increase evictions. Only 9% of Oregonians being evicted receive the legal representation necessary to understand and respond to these types of loopholes. Farington *et al.* *Expanding* these loopholes will lead to greater possibilities of discriminatory evictions and fair housing violations.

Landlords already have myriad tools to evict tenants for repeated lease violations, often with little notice. This bill does less to address malicious actors than would make things more difficult for vulnerable tenants and families falling on hard times. When evictions happen in this housing market, they lead to homelessness. We must do all we can to prevent unfair displacement and mitigate homelessness in our communities.

Instead of taking this large step backward in our fight for housing stability, we should be joining together to make stable housing an obtainable reality for all Oregonians. I urge you to **vote against HB 2305** and hope you will focus on the collective and critically important work to increase housing supply, support preservation and affordable housing solutions, support eviction prevention and rent assistance solutions, and increased access to supportive services and shelter.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SAC", written over a horizontal line.

Steven M. Crawford

Legal Director

Fair Housing Council of Oregon