



HB 2697 - Testimony to House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
February 17, 2025

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Breese-Iverson, and esteemed members of the House Committee,

My name is Hannah Alzgal and I am writing on behalf of Unite Oregon - an organization made up of and led by immigrants and refugees, people experiencing poverty, rural communities, and Black and Indigenous peoples. We are communities united in advancing racial justice towards shared causes, including housing.

We write to urge your support for HB 2967, which is a straightforward solution to terminate rental application fees. The cycle of poverty experienced by many of our members is often rooted in the endless cycle of fees and costs trying to access basic needs - whether that be housing, energy, education, and beyond. And like in many of these sectors, these fees often are the operational costs of doing business being offset on communities just trying to survive month-to-month, paycheck-to-paycheck. For many of our members, they are put into positions to seek financial assistance exactly because of these destabilizing costs that they are struggling to keep up with. Most are just trying to save up enough to cover necessities, especially when seeking to rent housing. These costs range from property to property with difficult recourse to secure their fees back when they are turned away from housing. Communities of color are statistically proven to apply to more rental properties than their white counterparts, thus experiencing more of a drain on their financial resources.

Instead of roundabout solutions to attend to these concerns, the elimination of application fees is one of the simplest ways we can reduce barriers to our communities being housed while giving them the opportunity to focus on spending resources to take care of their wellbeing. This bill can give Oregonians one less thing to stress about as they try to cover their most basic expenses. To achieve this and continue striving towards a future vision of safety and health for all communities, we urge you to support HB 2967.

Sincerely,
Hannah Alzgal
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