

Submitter: Sammi Weethee

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2305

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

I am writing in opposition to HB 2305, the three-strikes bill, before the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness.

My name is Samantha Weethee. I'm Deaf and I am the Director of Advocacy at Bridges Oregon. Bridges Oregon is a nonprofit organization based in Salem, Oregon that provides service statewide to the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing population. My department works a lot with domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, who also experience a lot of barriers. We also have different departments within our organization and one of them provides services mainly to the intellectually & developmentally disabled (I/DD) community. We've had a lot of clients come to us for help in regards to any contact from their landlords. It causes an issue because there are barriers and a lot of landlords aren't aware or sometimes unwilling to work with the tenant who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing and/or I/DD... All the clients that come to us are always MORE than willing to work and fix their mistakes in whatever the notice calls for. Most of the time, it's just a misunderstanding that can be resolved with a simple fix.

My experience working with vulnerable communities in Oregon gives me concern that this bill will unduly impact disabled tenants, tenants from marginalized communities, and tenants experiencing financial hardship. These groups are already over-policed by landlords, and establishing stable housing is a challenge for these groups.

This bill will make it easier for landlords to evict tenants for minor infractions. Although this is not the specific goal of the Bill's proponents, its overly broad nature will make it easy for bad actors to abuse it.

I sincerely urge you to protect Oregon's most vulnerable tenants by voting against HB 2305. You can aid those of us on the front lines of Oregon's housing crisis by focusing efforts on legislation that will make housing more available and more equitable for these groups.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony and for your service to our communities.

Sincerely,
Samantha Weethee