

Submitter: Lydia Kiesling

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2967

Wednesday, February 19

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative,

I urge you to support HB 2967 to prohibit rental application fees. These fees create a major financial burden for all renters and make it harder to secure stable housing.

HB 2967 is directly related to #5 of the Renters' Bill of Rights (an issue campaign created by renters for renters), which I support. I am a homeowner but I spent decades as a renter, and I have experienced the financial stress looking for affordable housing for my family. Landlords may feel entitled to these fees due to the "administrative burden" of reviewing applications, but they are ultimately in the privileged position of having multiple people interested in their properties, from which they will directly (and inevitably) profit. Many landlords are unaware, or pretend to be unaware, that they are obligated to return these fees to denied applicants. These fees are incredibly inequitable in a landscape when many people have to apply to dozens of rentals before they secure housing they can afford (if they are fortunate enough to do so—and many are not). They are an unnecessary and inappropriate administrative tool, particularly during a crisis-level housing shortage!

Rental application fees disproportionately affect marginalized communities and keep families trapped in unstable housing situations. Not only are fees of this sort a financial burden, but they place additional burdens on renters who must educate landlords that they must return the money if they deny an application.

Current Oregon law is not helping renters enough. I urge you to put renter needs above landlord wants. Application fees exacerbate housing insecurity, limit access to affordable housing and place undue burdens on renters. I urge you to pass HB 2967 and use your power to support the Renters' Bill of Rights. Eliminating fees like application fees will help reduce barriers to housing and give renters a better chance at the stability we all deserve.

Thank you for your time,

Lydia Kiesling, Portland, Oregon
lydiakiesling@gmail.com