

February 20, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Dear Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

I respectfully urge your opposition to HB 2305, which would cancel out multiple agencies' efforts and taxpayers' money spent to keep some of the most vulnerable members of our community housed.

I have been a landlord-tenant attorney for over ten years. For over two years I have been working with Metropolitan Public Defender representing tenants. Most of the clients I represent have received termination notices for nonpayment of rent. Our director and chief attorneys established essential partnerships with Multnomah County and the City of Portland agencies to provide legal representation to tenants who otherwise could not afford to hire an attorney. Through these partnerships I have applied, and obtained, rental assistance for my clients that allow them to remain housed.

HB 2305 would negate all the effort my colleagues and I make to keep our clients housed. Specifically, often by the time my office gets a referral for a client facing eviction, they already owe at least three months of rent. When I speak with my clients, they tell me of the hardships they are facing that make it impossible to pay the outstanding rent, such as medical issues, sudden loss of employment, and family member's deaths. I know of landlords that serve an eviction notice for each month of unpaid rent and file separate eviction cases based on each notice. I have seen tenants that have two cases set for trial on separate notices (one for nonpayment of rent and one for nonpayment of utilities and late fees) while also having a first appearance scheduled on another nonpayment of rent notice for a subsequent month of rent.

Fortunately, for the last few years, I have usually referred my clients to enough rental assistance agencies that a tenant who is three or four months behind in rent can get at least current on their rent. Under HB 2305, a landlord could then turn around and serve a 30-day notice without a right to cure to the same tenant that after much effort was able to obtain legal services and rental assistance from multiple agencies.

HB 2305 doesn't stop at destroying a tenant's life who is unable to pay rent for some time. Its reach is much broader. Under HB 2305 a tenant that is physically unable to mow their yard for a few weeks, then parks in their neighbor's space during a fit of absent-mindedness, then invites friends over that get too rowdy, can also be facing homelessness after receiving a 30-day notice with no right to cure.

The legislature has realized that moving within 30 days is difficult, if not impossible, for people that have lived in their homes for more than a year by requiring landlords to serve 90-day notices if they want to terminate their tenancy, and then, only for qualifying reasons. HB 2305 is contrary and dismantling to essential statutes relied on for housing stability, like ORS 90.395 and ORS 90.427.

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

Sincerely,

Nicole Veluscek