



To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Nansi López, Policy Director for Centro Cultural
Re: Support for SB 599

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support SB 599 to ensure that all Oregonians have access to fair housing, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status. We all deserve housing in Oregon as it's the foundation for all Oregonians to live healthy and thriving lives.

Centro Cultural is the oldest and longest-serving Latino culturally-specific organization in Oregon. Centro was founded 50 years ago by 14 migrant families who believed in creating a vibrant and cohesive society, shared, valued, and open for community members from different ethnicities and backgrounds. Since then, Centro has served as a safe place for our local Latino community, low-income migrant farmworkers, immigrant refugee communities, and all who come to our doors. Our mission is to be a home for Latino cultures, serving the needs of our diverse community by promoting personal growth and empowerment. To create lasting change for families of color and low-income individuals, stimulate systems change, and work with key stakeholders to reduce barriers and provide essential resources and services for the families we serve. Since our founders decided to begin this journey in 1972, Centro has continued to grow to ensure our community members thrive, working with regional, state, county, and city-wide agencies to advocate for more resources and equitable systems change to support communities of color. Centro's roster of programs seeks to disrupt systemic oppression and racism while converting our clients into agents of change. *SB 599 is a bill that aligns with Centro's work to combat systems that create barriers that further perpetuate access to basic needs like housing.*

The bill is modeled after a provision in [the local ordinance](#) in the City of Portland that has been in effect for years. It extends that protection statewide, ensuring consistency of protections across all communities. Four other states have similar statewide protections. (NY, WA, CA, IL)

The bill will amend the Landlord-Tenant Act to provide that:



- 1.) A Landlord may not inquire about or disclose with intent to harm, a tenant or applicant's immigration or citizenship status;
- 2.) A Landlord must accept any of the following, or a combination thereof, to verify the name, date of birth, and photo of the Applicant:
 - a. Evidence of Social Security Number (SSN Card);
 - b. Valid Permanent Resident Alien Registration Receipt Card;
 - c. Immigrant Visa;
 - d. Individual Tax Payer Identification Number (ITIN);
 - e. Non-immigrant visa;
 - f. Any government-issued identification regardless of expiration date; or
 - g. Any non-governmental identification or combination of identifications that would permit a reasonable verification of identity.
- 3.) A Landlord may not discriminate against a tenant or applicant based on immigration or citizenship status.
- 4.) The bill would not apply to landlord compliance with federally subsidized housing benefit eligibility screening requirements.

***Note that technical amendments are pending to the bill to ensure that the language accomplishes the above intent.*

In Oregon, we are facing a housing crisis, and it's crucial that we don't exacerbate this crisis by imposing additional barriers to housing. It's the firm belief of Centro that all Oregonians, regardless of their immigration status, should have access to housing.

We strongly urge you to support this bill, which aligns with Oregon's values and will make Oregon a home for all who choose to call it home.

Sincerely,

Nansi López, Policy Director for Centro Cultural
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