

Submitter: Nicole LaRose
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB599
Re: Support for SB 599

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

I am writing in strong support of SB 599, to ensure that all Oregonians have access to fair housing, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status.

Passage of SB 599 will increase Housing Stability by removing immigration or citizenship status as a barrier, which helps stabilize families who may otherwise be at risk of eviction or homelessness due to discrimination, thus leading to more secure communities. Support for SB 599 aligns with State values: Oregon has a long history of promoting inclusivity and protecting vulnerable populations, and this bill is a natural extension of those values.

While most housing providers already adhere to best practices and do not discriminate on the basis of citizenship or immigration status, passage of the bill ensures that these principles are codified in our state statutes and sends a protective and inclusive message to our communities.

The bill is modeled after a provision in local ordinance in the City of Portland that has been in effect for years, and 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.

For all of these reasons, I urge your strong support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Nicole LaRose