

OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE



SUPPORT SB 599 SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY MARCH 4, 2025

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

Thank you for considering this testimony. **On behalf of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force (Oregon SATF), I submit this testimony in support of HB 599, to ensure that all Oregonians have access to fair housing, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status.**

Formed in 1999 by then Attorney General Hardy Meyers, the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (or Oregon SATF) is a statewide, nongovernmental nonprofit. Our mission is to facilitate and support a collaborative, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence. We accomplish our mission by advancing primary prevention and providing multi-disciplinary training and technical assistance to responders in Oregon and nationally.

Access to housing and safety from sexual violence are deeply interconnected issues. Data shows that more than 1 in 10 women who have experienced a sexual assault reported that the assault occurred in their own homes, which can lead to a need to swiftly relocate to safe, affordable housing where the perpetrator of the sexual assault cannot find them to re-offend and the survivor can escape the environmental trauma associated with the living space.* **Additionally, homelessness and housing instability increase the risk of being targeted for sexual violence and associated harms.**

This is especially true for individuals who are members of other vulnerable communities, such as immigrants. Speaking from the decades of experience we have at Oregon SATF of working with and on behalf of survivors of sexual violence, we can attest to the ways that a victim's

immigration status is often used against them, as a means of control and manipulation that facilitate compounding layers of violence and abuse. HB 599 would provide greater stability for those vulnerable to sexual violence victimization and send a clear message that their safety, inclusion, and well-being matters. Removing immigration or citizenship status as a barrier also helps stabilize individuals and families that may otherwise be at risk for eviction or homelessness due to discrimination, thus **acting as a preventative measure against violence and abuse, and creating safer and more secure communities across Oregon.**

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.

These amendments have the ability to reduce violence, abuse, and related harms, and to create safer communities for all of us - immigrants, those without citizenship status, and those with it who share neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces with one another.

At Oregon SATF, we believe that world without violence is possible, but it will take all of stepping up to support the policies and practices that we know reduce harm and expand safety and opportunities for one another. SB 599 is a very important piece of the puzzle that will get us closer to achieving that vision.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Rose". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shannon Rose
Executive Director
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force

*Stop Street Harassment. (2018). The facts behind the #metoo movement: A national study on sexual harassment and assault. Stop Street Harassment. <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Full-Report-2018-National-Study-on-SexualHarassment-and-Assault.pdf>