



3 March 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislature

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

RE: Senate Bill 599

My name is Jimmy Jones, and I am the Executive Director of the **Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency** in Salem. We serve low-income residents of Marion, Polk, and nine other counties across Oregon. Annually we provide more than \$80 million in services and direct client assistance for housing, homelessness, energy and weatherization, and early learning programs to more than 60,000 Oregonians in poverty. I also serve as the Vice President for Legislative Affairs at the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, sit on the Housing Committee of the Racial Justice Council, and previously was a member of the House Bill 2100 Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities, and recently Chaired the Legislature's Joint Task Force on Hospital Discharge. For many years, I have been an advocate for the homeless and housing unstable residents of our state.

We write in strong support of SB 599, to ensure that all Oregonians have access to fair housing, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status. At MWVCAA, we are the region's largest emergency housing provider, housing hundreds of formerly homeless residents of Oregon per year, and preventing thousands of evictions over the past five years.

While many housing providers already adhere to best practices and do not discriminate on the basis of citizenship or immigration status, the passage of Senate Bill 599 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. It extends these protections statewide, ensuring consistency of protections across all communities. Four other states have similar statewide protections, including Washington and California.

The bill prohibits landlords from asking about or disclosing with intent to harm, immigration or citizenship statuses and further bars landlords from discriminating against tenants or applications based on immigration or citizenship status. These are very difficult times for our undocumented community in Oregon. Many are in mixed households with American citizens, and there is grave fear in all corners of Oregon. Some are not sending their children to school, and many others are not applying for basic benefits to which they have a legal right in Oregon. We do not want anyone to self-select into homelessness out of fear of immigration concerns.

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.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Jones
Executive Director