

Submitter: Ruth Neuhauser
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB599

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.

I grew up in a family that worked closely with migrant farmworkers and in a small town whose economy relied on the labor of immigrants. Now, I live in Portland and know families and individuals with tenuous immigration statuses - and that doesn't mean they deserve any less stable or available housing on top of that.

While many 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).

Immigration status checks for rental applications will do nothing but open an already vulnerable population up to houselessness, increasing the weight on public health system, costs for supporting unhoused folks, greater rates of addiction and a less stable workforce for our farms and warehouse, service, and construction sectors.

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

Sincerely,

Ruth Neuhauser