

March 4th, 2025

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

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is an interfaith association connecting us to more than 750 member congregations statewide. Our programs provide immigration legal services, help refugees start new lives in safety and dignity and help immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence become financially independent and find secure housing.

I and many of my colleagues at EMO are immigrants or the children of immigrants. My mother fled Cuba when she was four years old. I am proud to stand with our communities in support of this bill.

While it's true most housing providers do not discriminate on the basis of citizenship or immigration status, it is a glaring oversight that this type of discrimination is not prohibited in statute. Non-Citizens are often in precarious financial or legal situations and can be easily exploited or excluded by housing providers. SB 599 enshrines protection in law and sends a reassuring and welcoming message to our communities.

I would encourage you to read the opposition testimonies; many people have gone on the record saying they only want to rent to citizens and that they have a right to discriminate based on immigration status.

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 Taxpayer 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.*

At EMO we are guided by the shared principle of our faith partners. Welcoming the stranger is core to our mission but how can we do that if providers can deny a basic necessity like housing based only in immigration status?

We urge your strong support of this bill and ensure that all Oregonians have access to safe housing. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to our communities.

Sincerely,

Edward Buck-Shannon
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon