



April 20, 2025

Re: Support for SB 599A

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kim McCarty, and I am the Executive Director of Community Alliance of Tenants, Oregon's only statewide tenants' rights organization. I submit this testimony in support of SB 599 A on behalf of the thousands of renters we support through our hotline, workshops, and direct advocacy.

State and federal fair housing laws already prohibit discrimination based on national origin and based on race. Because there is significant overlap between race, national origin, immigration, and citizenship, it is considered best practice not to discriminate based on immigration or citizenship, in recognition of the importance of compliance with fair housing laws. While many housing providers already adhere to best practices and do not discriminate based on 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.

At CAT, we often hear from tenants denied housing due to assumptions about their immigration status. Illegal discrimination and harassment can come in the form of discrimination based on national origin, religion, race, and color. Sometimes this discrimination happens by refusing to accept alternative forms to verify identity, even though it is best practice to accept a range of documents. Protecting the civil rights of one group is protective of everyone. We all know there are times when anyone may not have one set of documents so alternatives help everyone. There are many ways for a landlord to accomplish their due diligence regarding identity for a background or credit check and SB 599A offers that guidance.

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,

Kim McCarty
Executive Director
Community Alliance of Tenants

kmccarty@oregoncat.org