

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

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) submits this testimony in **support of House Bill 599**, which prohibits discrimination in real estate transactions based on immigration status. This bill strengthens Oregon's commitment to equitable access to housing by ensuring that individuals and families are not denied rental or homeownership opportunities based on where they were born or their legal status.

### **Addressing Housing Discrimination Based on Immigration Status**

Housing is a fundamental right, yet many immigrants, refugees, and mixed-status families in Oregon face significant barriers in securing stable housing due to discrimination. Access to safe and affordable housing should be determined by a person's qualifications as a tenant or buyer, not by their immigration status.

Discrimination in real estate transactions disproportionately harms communities of color, low-income families, and individuals who may already face systemic barriers to stable housing. Landlords should not have the authority to inquire about, disclose, or deny housing based on immigration status. HB 599 ensures that fair housing laws in Oregon remain strong, protecting all residents from arbitrary and harmful discrimination.

### **The Harm of Immigration-Based Housing Discrimination**

OCBA recognizes that discrimination in housing has a long and troubling history in Oregon, with communities of color, including Black Oregonians and immigrant populations, facing exclusionary practices for decades. Without clear protections like those outlined in HB 599, tenants and prospective homeowners remain vulnerable to unfair treatment, including:

- Unjust denials of rental applications based solely on immigration status.
- Fear of eviction or retaliation due to landlords inquiring about legal status.
- Increased risk of exploitation, including predatory leases and unsafe living conditions.

Excluding individuals from housing due to immigration status does not contribute to public safety or economic stability. Instead, it creates conditions that increase homelessness, financial hardship, and housing instability for families who contribute to Oregon's communities and workforce.



Oregon has made significant strides in advancing equity and justice for marginalized communities. HB 599 builds upon these efforts by ensuring that real estate transactions remain fair, unbiased, and accessible to all qualified applicants, regardless of immigration status.

As a body committed to equity, civil rights, and the advancement of Black Oregonians and other communities facing systemic barriers, OCBA urges the Legislature to pass HB 599. This bill upholds the principles of fair housing, economic opportunity, and non-discrimination, which define Oregon's commitment to justice.

We appreciate the Committee's time and consideration and urge your support for House Bill 599.

**Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA)**

