

Submitter: Justice Hager
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB599
Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SB 599A, to clarify that all Oregonians have access to fair housing, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status. The bill was amended in the Senate to address technical requests from stakeholders, and comes to the House with bi-partisan support. We urge this committee's support and swift passage, to ensure fair housing for all Oregonians.

If we truly want our state to be a sanctuary for the most marginalized people in our country, then we need to make sure that the pathways to meeting basic needs are open to those people. There is no need more fundamental than that for safe, reliable shelter.

State and federal fair housing laws already prohibit discrimination on the basis of national origin and on the basis of race. Because there is significant overlap between race, national origin, immigration and citizenship, it is considered best practice not to discriminate on the basis of 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 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)

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

Sincerely,

Justice Alexander Hager