

April 23, 2025

Rep. Jason Kropf, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

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

I am writing from the Multnomah County Department of County Human Services in support of SB 599A, which will ensure that all Oregon tenants have access to fair housing, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status.

At the Department of County Human Services, we are guided by our North Star: *In Multnomah County, every person – at every stage in life – has equitable opportunities to thrive*. The individuals and families we serve struggle with economic and housing insecurity, which in turn impacts their health, mental health, safety and wellbeing. For children, lack of stable housing and the stress of potential eviction or homelessness, also profoundly affects their development and future educational and life success. This brings both a human and economic cost to our communities and our state.

SB 599A would strengthen equal access to stable housing in Oregon by prohibiting housing discrimination based on immigration or citizenship status. Specifically, the bill will amend the Landlord-Tenant Act to provide that, except as required by a federal program that provides rent subsidies or affordable rents:

1. A landlord may not inquire about the immigration or citizenship status of an applicant, a tenant or a member of an applicant or tenant's household
2. If the landlord requires verification of the identity of an applicant or tenant, a landlord shall accept for such purposes:
 - a. A Social Security card or evidence of a Social Security number;
 - b. A certified copy of a record of live birth;
 - c. A permanent resident card issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services;
 - d. An immigrant or nonimmigrant visa;
 - e. Individual Tax Payer Identification Number card issued by the Internal Revenue Service;
 - f. A passport, driver license or other 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.

In addition, the bill provides that:

3. A landlord may not discriminate against an applicant, a tenant or a member of an applicant or tenant's household on the basis of actual or perceived immigration or citizenship status.
4. A landlord may not, with the intent or purpose of harassing, retaliating or intimidating, disclose or threaten to disclose the immigration or citizenship status of an applicant, a tenant or a member of an applicant or tenant's household.

SB 599A is modeled after a provision in local ordinance in the City of Portland that has been in effect for years and has been an important measure in our community to prevent discrimination. The bill extends these protections statewide and codifies them in state statute so that they are more easily promoted and enforced. Importantly, SB 599A addresses a critical gap in our current statutes. In doing so, it will also reduce barriers and fear immigrants experience in both the rental application process and with ongoing relationships with landlords during tenancy.

We at Multnomah County support SB 599A and ask that you take this important step to protect our community members from discrimination and support fair housing for all.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammad Bader', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mohammad Bader
Director
Department of County Human Services