



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

June 2, 2025

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3974, which caps rental application fees at \$20 and provides critical protections for Oregon renters.

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am testifying on behalf of SEIU Oregon, which is composed of two locals: Local 503 and Local 49. Together, we represent over 85,000 workers in Oregon and SW Washington. We support HB 3974 because our members—who are janitors, healthcare workers, and public employees that keep our state running—know firsthand how unjust rental practices push working families into instability.

This instability has been compounded by Oregon's housing crisis which has made it increasingly difficult for working families—particularly low-income renters and communities of color—to secure stable, affordable homes. Vulnerable renters often spend hundreds of dollars on application fees, sometimes for units they never secure, while facing discrimination and uncertainty. Research from the National Consumer Law Center shows that renters of color are twice as likely to submit five or more applications. At an average of \$50 a pop, that's \$250 that working families are spending just for a chance at housing; exacerbating the financial burden and deepening housing inequities.

HB 3974 offers a commonsense solution by:

- Capping application fees at \$20, aligning Oregon with states like Wisconsin and New York that have enacted similar protections.
- Allowing third-party screening reports, so renters aren't forced to pay duplicate fees for the same background check.
- And ensuring transparency and accountability by requiring landlords to disclose screening criteria and refund fees if no screening is conducted.

By limiting excessive fees and strengthening transparency, we can help ensure that every Oregonian, regardless of income, has a fair shot at finding a safe and stable home.

SEIU Oregon asks this committee to pass HB 3974.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos
Political and Government Relations Organizer
SEIU Oregon State Council