

Submitter: Rob Cochran
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3974
From: Rob Cochran, Community Alliance of Tenants (Portland, Multnomah County)
Re: Support HB 3974 – Rental Application Fee \$20 Cap

To: House Rules Committee – Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazen, Vice-Chair Pham, Representative Davis, Representative Elmer, Representative Kropf, Representative Valderrama

My name is Rob Cochran, and I serve as a Tenant Education & Support Coordinator at the Community Alliance of Tenants in Portland, Oregon. I am writing today in strong support of HB 3974, which would cap rental application screening fees at \$20.

Every day, I speak with renters across Oregon—working families, elders, disabled tenants, and young people just starting out—who are being squeezed out of the rental market by rising costs and repeated barriers. Among the most frustrating and demoralizing of these barriers are high, repeated application fees that often go nowhere. The emotional toll of spending \$50, \$60, or more multiple times a week—without even a callback, much less a safe place to live—is both financially and psychologically exhausting.

These fees are not just an inconvenience; they are a structural obstacle to housing access. And the burden isn't distributed equally. National research confirms what we hear on the hotline every day: Black and Latine renters are disproportionately affected, often submitting five or more applications just to find housing.

Capping rental application fees at \$20 is not only reasonable, it's overdue. This is a modest, common-sense reform already in place in Wisconsin and New York. Vermont and Massachusetts go even further by prohibiting these fees altogether. Oregon renters deserve at least the same consideration.

This bill is not anti-landlord—it was developed through a robust, interim workgroup largely composed of housing providers and includes flexibility for universal application systems like Zillow. It's a compromise, not a radical overhaul. Screening costs are part of the cost of doing business—just like in other industries.

Please support HB 3974 and show renters across Oregon that access to stable housing should not come with a \$50 price tag at every turn.

Thank you for your time and your service to our communities.

Sincerely,
Rob Cochran
Tenant Education & Support Coordinator
Community Alliance of Tenants
Portland, Oregon