

June 3, 2025

TO: House Committee on Rules
FROM: Grace Fortson, Our Children Oregon
SUBJECT: Support for HB 3974

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

My name is Grace Fortson, I am the Policy and Advocacy Manager with Our Children Oregon (OCO). OCO is a statewide nonprofit committed to whole child wellbeing through the Children's Agenda- a comprehensive legislative agenda created and supported by our over 135 member organizations across the state. **I urge your support of HB 3974 which will cap rental application screening fees at \$20.**

Tenants need this policy because the cost of application fees snowballs in a tight rental market, increasing the cost of housing before tenants even secure their future housing. And this is especially true of our most vulnerable renters.

According to research from the National Consumer Law Center, Black, Latine applicants are twice as likely to submit 5 or more applications.

We must also contextualize the rapidly increasing rent and application prices with the broader financial realities of Oregonians. 50% of Oregon's renting families are rent burdened, meaning they spend more than one third of their income on rent. About 14% of children in Oregon are experiencing poverty.

Additionally, close to a fifth of Oregon's children are experiencing food insecurity¹. Without action from the legislature, the cost of applications will become an increasingly insurmountable barrier for Oregonians to access housing.

Setting rental fee caps at \$20 is a compromise to ensure fairness and dignity to renters. **I urge you to support the \$20 cap on rental application fees by supporting HB 3974.**

Thank you,

Grace Fortson, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Our Children Oregon

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¹ <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>