

Submitter: Samantha Ishihara
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3974

June 4, 2025

Representative Ben Bowman House Majority Leader
Chair, House Committee on Rules
900 Court St NE, H-295
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support House Bill 3974

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazen and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Samantha Ishihara and I am a renter living in the Kerns neighborhood in Portland. I am testifying in support of House Bill 3974 to further regulate and be responsible for ensuring that Oregonians are not being significantly impacted by residential applicant screening charges.

There are many reasons why someone may need to move from their home, whether it be poor living conditions, raising rents, or just wanting a better living situation for their children and families. When renters are juggling multiple applications with expensive screening fees, those expenses add up. On top of that, if you are already financially struggling, high applicant screening charges can be a barrier for people and families to achieve the housing situation that is clean, safe, and appropriate for themselves.

It is also important to remember that studies have shown rental application fees and tenant screening are significant barriers that make the housing search impossibly difficult for many people, especially low-income renters and renters of color. A 2022 Zillow survey found that Black and Latinx renters were nearly twice as likely to report submitting five or more applications, and that people of color reported paying higher median application fees than white renters.

My family is experiencing this situation as we speak. My mother has consistently needed to move due to pests and mold problems or raising rents, and has been low-income despite working all her life. Because of rental application and screening fees being \$50+, she is unable to apply to more than one or two rentals which has resulted her to successfully be accepted to housing that is either the same or worse in quality.

In this situation and in many others, a \$20 applicant screening charge cap, one that has been successfully set in other states, would have been more realistic and attainable as Oregonians search for the housing they need and deserve. As a matter of fact, Eugene has recently set their screening charge cap to \$10 in efforts to make the application process more accessible and affordable.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 3984 as this bill supports fairness, accessibility, and an invitation to find housing that is safe, stable, clean, and appropriate for the Oregonians that need it most. In voting in favor of this bill, you are showing other states considering this type of legislative act that Oregon can be a leader in removing barriers to housing affordability.

Sincerely,
Samantha Ishihara