



Testimony in Support of SB 282
Gloria Sandoval, Unite Oregon
March 9, 2021

Chair Jama, Co-Chair Linthicum, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 282. My name is Gloria Sandoval and I am the Political Director at Unite Oregon. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our 32,542 members, many of whom are renters. Our organization is led by people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty, as we work across Oregon to build a unified intercultural movement for justice.

It has now been a year since Unite Oregon began providing direct services for COVID-19 relief. We have distributed just under half a million dollars in relief funds and it is still not enough. Not only do our communities need more support but we as an organization, need the funding for greater capacity to quickly distribute the relief funds. We need more time and our members need more protections to recover from this setback. We need to make sure our families can move forward without retaliation from accepting support and House Bill 282 does just that.

Oregon families need an extended eviction moratorium and grace period for repayment until February 2022 to give time for assistance distribution. Additionally we would like to extend the nonpayment notice. We need eviction records taking place during the pandemic to be sealed. Credit history reports on rent debt during the moratorium must be prohibited during the COVID-19 period and grace period. Occupancy limit violations should be eliminated as a cause of eviction during the pandemic. And finally, tenants need to be protected from retaliations against minor violations. Without these changes the eviction moratorium fails to protect families the way it was intended. If we punish our residents for surviving we will never recover in order to move forward.

While distributing funds we have heard from many members about how COVID-19 has negatively impacted their housing situations. Some lost their jobs, others experienced reduced hours and a few were quarantined and unable to work. During these setbacks they lost a portion if not all of their income. They have depended on the eviction moratorium to protect them while they look for relief funds, loans and new work. In some situations individuals moved in together to combine their



incomes and/or take turns providing childcare while others worked. Our members are working very hard to pay off their debts and recover and we need to support them in the process. They are not proud of their hardships, they are not abusing the system, they are scared and doing their best to survive a pandemic.

If we, as a state, expect to recover from the pandemic we must first begin at home. Our reintegration into society and contributions to our communities all depend on the stability of our homes. Help protect our families, our multigenerational homes, our single parent homes, our newly arrived Americans homes, our homes. Unite Oregon's 32,000 voices ask you to support Senate Bill 282 -1 amendment.

Thank you.