

TO: Louise Skyler
FROM: House Committee on Housing
RE: YES on SB 282 to Emerge Stronger
DATE: April 26, 2021

Chair Fahey and members of the committee,

My name is Louise Skyler and I live in Portland. I am writing to you today as a member of the Oregon Food Bank community in support of Senate Bill 282, which would extend the grace period for tenants to get caught up on back rent.

I'm assuming I don't have to tell you the impact Covid has had on the economy and how that has impacted our fellow Oregonians. I also assume you are getting out from behind your desk and listening to the struggles people have with being able to afford the essentials needed to take care of themselves and their families.

There is so much that can and must be done to help people, who through no fault of their own, are facing homelessness. While the overwhelming majority of tenants have stayed current on their rent - often foregoing food and health care to keep up - between 11% and 16% have fallen behind. Without action, families and individuals who owe back rent could be evicted in July. **Senate Bill 282 is an important and urgent next step to ensure that Oregonians who rent their homes are not left behind** as Oregon starts to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. It will help ensure people have more time to recover by:

- Protecting Oregonians from eviction by extending the grace period for repayment of back rent,
- Ensuring tenants don't face additional barriers to housing in the future because of income lost during the pandemic, and
- Giving people facing eviction more time to apply for rental assistance

I work for Oregon Food Bank and my job is to help people find resources for food and housing. The number of calls and requests for assistance has increased tremendously and it will only get worse if we don't support Senate Bill 282. I am one of the lucky ones that isn't facing eviction, but I see in my neighborhood whole families, including children living in tents, or their cars. This is not because they want to live like this. It's not because they made poor choices. They deserve better. They deserve our respect and support.

I strongly urge you to vote yes on SB 282 and do everything you can to ensure Oregon's recovery leaves no one behind and we can emerge stronger together.