



TO: The Senate Committee on Housing and Development
FROM: Disability Rights Oregon (DRO)
DATE: March 9, 2021
RE: DRO's Testimony in Support of SB 282

Dear Chair, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee:

Disability Rights Oregon supports SB 282-1, with Senator Jama's proposed amendment -1, for the following reasons:

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a housing crisis in Oregon and all over the country. Yet Persons with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the economic effects of the pandemic as they are employed in industries that have suffered the most in the pandemic. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/05/nyregion/workers-disabilities-unemployment-covid.html>). As a result, they are more likely to have accrued rental debt during the pandemic. Without SB 282-1, persons with disabilities will face termination for non-payment of rent after June 30, 2021, at higher rates than the general population.

Evictions and damaged credit history due to non-payment of rent also will likely have a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities already face significant barriers when applying for housing due to discrimination, accessibility, and source of income concerns. Additional difficulties caused by COVID should not create an additional hurdle for the future for tenants with disabilities. SB 282-1 will protect tenants with disabilities ability to rent in the future by prohibiting landlords from screening out tenants due to COVID-related evictions and credit issues.

Persons with disabilities are most likely to have lost income, are more likely to be renters, and are more likely to have contracted or experienced severe symptoms related to COVID. Re-entry into the job market will likely be slower compared to those in the general population. Tenants with disabilities will benefit the most from a longer grace period for repayment created by SB 282-1.

Working mothers, Black, indigenous, and persons of color (BIPOC) communities, blue-collar workers, and people with disabilities all need to be protected. SB 282 with its proposed amendment will provide those needed protections in housing. Thank you.

About Disability Rights Oregon

Disability Rights Oregon is a statewide nonprofit law firm that upholds the civil rights of 950,000 people with disabilities in Oregon to live, work, and engage in the community. Disability Rights Oregon works to transform systems, policies, and practices to give more people the opportunity to reach their full potential. Since 1977, the organization has served as Oregon's federally authorized and mandated Protection & Advocacy System. Disability Rights Oregon is committed to ensuring the civil rights of all people are protected and enforced.

For any concerns or questions contact Meghan Moyer at 503-432-5777.