



community alliance of tenants

Representative Pam Marsh
Chair, House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

February 17, 2025

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee,

The Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), urges your support for HB 2134. CAT is Oregon's only statewide tenant-led renters' rights group. We serve thousands of tenants annually with education and referral services as an upstream approach to preventing homelessness.

HB 2134 allows a tenant to terminate a tenancy during the fixed term without penalty upon 30 days' notice if the landlord delivers certain notices terminating the tenancy in 90 days or more. Tenants call CAT regarding lease break penalties because they are expensive and often unfair.

When the landlord is initiating an early termination tenants rightly believe that the landlord broke the terms of the agreement and the tenant should be freed from lease break penalties. However, this is not the case and the landlord-initiated termination can become very expensive for the tenant. When the landlord gives a 90-day notice to terminate an agreement, tenants do not have control over when they will be approved for new housing.

In this competitive rental market, it is difficult to find housing. A tenant often has to accept the first place available even if the date could cause extra expense or lose it without a promise of finding a new home in 90-days. As a result, tenants can be obligated to pay a lease-break fee or pay rent at the new location while also paying rent until the expiration of the 90-day notice in their current location. A lease break fee can cost up to 1 1/2 times the monthly rent. This is unfair because the landlord broke the contract and may experience gains.

We believe lease contracts should be fair to ensure stable housing and strong communities. To that end, we urge you to support HB 2134.

Sincerely,

Kim McCarty
Executive Director
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