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February 17, 2025

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

RE: Opposition for HB 2305

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson,

Portland Tenants United, the Portland city-wide tenant union, writes to you today in strong opposition to HB 2305, which would allow landlords to evict tenants for late payments with no ability to cure, as well as make it easier to evict tenants for lease violations. Through organizing, direct action, coalition building, and civic engagement, Portland Tenants United fights to keep people in their homes, and to achieve dignity and security for all tenants.

HB 2305 is simply out of touch with reality. Why would the state support creating a three strike law in a housing crisis? Just this past week thousands of Oregonians working for the federal government were laid off with no notice. Finding a new job takes time, and if rent assistance is even available it takes time to actually receive it. If HB 2305 became law, Oregonians on the margin would become unhoused.

If landlords aren't living beyond their means, paying rent a few days late is essentially a victimless crime. If landlords are unable to pay their bills because of a few late rent payments, we would suggest that the landlord buy less Starbucks, avocado toast, and cancel some of their streaming accounts. If paying rent late makes a tenant irresponsible, surely it's significantly more irresponsible to have multiple mortgages and be relying on someone else's income to pay it?

Until we have a just system that provides housing for all, we will continue to experience life events that disrupt folks' ability to pay their rent. HB 2305 ignores the humanity of tenants and relegates them to numbers on a spreadsheet, where landlords are free to evict them for petty infractions. It would essentially undo all of the reforms we've passed in the past decade and create an open season of landlord harassment which would disproportionately affect BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and low-income Oregonians. Landlords are probably going to give you sob stories about so-called "problem" tenants, but the fact is it's already possible to evict people who break their lease. Landlords want to skip the part where tenants get due process and have a chance to fix the problem because they want to save money on legal fees.



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I would encourage any legislator considering voting to move this bill forward to read MultiFamily Northwest's standard residential lease agreement, which is used in a significant number of rentals across Oregon. If simple lease violations can no longer be cured, all the non-discrimination language in the world won't stop landlords from pushing out tenants who are part of marginalized groups. Why even bother having protections against no-cause evictions if the cause could be a late payment or two combined leaving a towel out on the balcony? Yes, people are issued lease violation notices for drying laundry on their balconies.

In this moment of great national upheaval, Oregon has the ability to take a stand for the most vulnerable people in our society. We've got a long way to go, but we've come too far to walk back the meager protections we do have. Bills like this make it clear: Landlords do not see their tenants as human. But we are. We are here, and we're not going anywhere. We deserve dignity and respect, including safe, affordable, and stable housing. Please vote no on advancing HB 2305 out of committee.

Sincerely,

Portland Tenants United Organizing Committee