



February 14, 2023

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue. My name is Emerson Hamlin, and I am a political organizer for the Oregon Nurses Association. The Oregon Nurses Association is a nurses union and professional association representing over 15,000 health care workers and providers, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, and county health departments across Oregon.

We strongly urge you to swiftly pass House Bill 2001, which is an important piece of the response to our housing crisis. The bill ensures a focus on youth homelessness prevention, provides innovative approaches to addressing housing supply barriers, and contains critical measures to help prevent eviction-caused homelessness.

We are particularly writing to urge support of Sections 14-26 of HB 2001, which contain essential and reasonable negotiated improvements to Oregon's eviction statutes to promote stability and payment rather than displacement and eviction. These Sections of the bill:

- Expand the time after a notice of nonpayment before being taken to court from 72 hours to 10 days.
- Provide that nonpayment eviction notices and court forms should include information about where to find rent assistance and legal assistance, and provide access to translation of these forms.
- Amend first appearance and trial timelines to ensure that tenants have a greater chance of finding help before their hearing.
- Provide that an eviction case will be dismissed if payment is made before final judgment.
- Make the default judgment process fairer.
- Streamline the eviction sealing process for those who qualify for sealing, removing a procedural barrier to future housing stability.

Our members are very supportive of efforts to keep people housed, because they consistently see the detrimental impacts of homelessness on patients' health. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council has long found that homelessness creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones: between high levels of stress, little ability to access nutritious food, no safe place to store medications, and inconsistent access to clean running water, it is easy for



minor issues like cuts or colds to escalate into major health problems¹. Similarly, people without housing experience higher rates of hypertension, asthma, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS than their housed peers.² In total, people experiencing homelessness have higher rates of illness and die an average of twelve years sooner than the average US population.³ If we want healthy communities, we must do all we can to keep people housed.

Additionally, this is an issue that directly impacts our own members. Although nurses have well-paying jobs, many are renters, and are facing the same exorbitant rent increases as other Oregonians. Our members often live in the same communities that they work in and are doubly committed to their service because their patients are also their neighbors. It is important that they can continue to live and serve in the communities they call home.

Passing HB 2001 is not only critical to keep people housed, but to protect the health of our communities across Oregon. ONA urges a yes vote. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin

¹ National Health Care for the Homeless Council, 2019. *Homelessness & Health: What's the Connection?* [Fact Sheet].

² Zlotnick& Zerger, 2008

³ National Health Care for the Homeless Council, 2019. *Homelessness & Health: What's the Connection?* [Fact Sheet].