

Submitter: Amber Cook

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB799

Greetings,

As

- a renter since college,
- a current low income renter in LIHTC housing,
- a tenant organizer,
- a commissioner on the Rental Serves Commission,
- and a professional eviction court observer for the PSU Research Study on Evictions in Oregon,

I'd like to say how welcome and how needed SB799 is.

Renters are having a very hard time of it with the combination of:

- 1) rents raised high for over a decade, far beyond what most people can actually earn in Oregon
- 2) big business allowed to cut worker pay and hours down to a non-livable wage,
- 3) and now the artificial rise in prices of a false inflation but with real higher prices for working consumers.

While a lot of our food has tripled in price, SNAP benefits are going back down by \$75-100 per person as the pandemic boost to food benefits was removed in Jan.

Just as one example of how much worse it is going to get for low to moderate income people this year, on top of 15% rent increases allowed as of Jan.

Every day dozens of people are evicted in the Multnomah County courthouse alone, while dozens more move out and are displaced without a fight. Day after day after day. I've seen firsthand how many renters tell the court, I have the money now, or I got rent assistance, but my landlord wouldn't accept it, and they get evicted right then and there.

Where I live, residents are being given eviction notices every week for being unable to pay rent. The process is fast, and while they struggle to get rent assistance, the biggest impediment is that it takes some time for RA to be dispensed (reasonably enough) but also most landlords delay in sending in the required ledger or documentation, delaying the process much more, until it becomes "too late" according to the timelines laid out in current LT law. In a society where now every place is understaffed, calls aren't returned and responses are massively slowed down across the board, and mail takes a week not a day to arrive, renters NEED more time just for a reasonable amount of time to get in the required paperwork and

get help. While working FT, having families that depend on them, not always possessing phones with data plans or having home/work access to wifi. And at the same time having to live with the terror of ‘what do I do if I can’t get RA in time, I have to be ready to move out right away’ because the courts will grant the landlord same-day removals every time they ask for it.

Working people who rent, need:

- 1) rents to be moderated to local wages,
- 2) they need more time to get help and pay current overcharged rent owed,
- 3) and they need to be allowed to stay in their homes and not be forced out by landlords who’s only goal is to squeeze more unearned income investment rent money out of them.

SB799 was intelligently and thoughtfully constructed to meet basic renter needs and to help keep thousands more from becoming homeless in the next year. Without harming landlords in any way.

Landlords love to tell you that being a landlord is too hard. It’s too much work. It costs too much. That if we make it any harder, landlords will sell their properties and stop being landlords and there’ll be nowhere for people to live.

It’s all a strategized poor me to maintain the privilege of undue power & profitability. And is not true.

In the history of property & housing ownership, there has never been a shortage of landlords, and there never will be. If some of the current crop of landlords can’t make enough money to satisfy their needs, I mean, greeds—because they have plenty to live on, then they can stop being landlords and others will take up the jobs happily, happy to make a decent profit without needing to harm others to get even more out of them.

Small, local landlords can be given such assistance as they need to stay in the black, corporate landlords can earn less. They’ll be fine.

SB799 is a much needed measure to help stabilize housing in Oregon. Don’t let landlords talk you out of it!