

Subject: Yes on SB 282-1

Chair Jama, Co-Chair Linthicum, members of the Committee,

I'm a father and a renter in Albany. Like so many renters, I'm struggling financially during the COVID pandemic.

I've lived in my home for five years and I've never been late on a single rent payment. I even used to be the on-site manager for the property management company. When COVID hit, this all went south. In May, 2020 in the midst of the pandemic, our property management company Duerksen & Associates Inc, raised our rent, which feels unconscionable. In March, I had just signed the paperwork to accept a new job but the position disappeared when COVID hit. I have a family to care for, including 2 children under 5. My biggest concern is keeping them safe and healthy. For Oregon to recover, we need to make sure that no one is left behind, especially families like mine with young children.

Thanks to rental assistance we kept up with payments for some time but now that we've fallen behind, Duerksen has gotten really adversarial. They've even started harassing my parents, our cosigners. Renters and families like mine need more time to pay back rent and access federal rent assistance. While we may be better positioned to pay rent by July, it'll be impossible to get fully caught up on back rent by then. We also need protections from landlord retaliation, that causes even more stress. I don't know what my family would do if we had marks on our credit that prevented us from future renting. I, like so many others, plan to pay my rent. I just need more time.

We've been hanging on for a year now. Forcing people into homelessness because they don't have time to get caught up is not an acceptable solution and is a public health risk. If we don't act now to support renters, this won't be something our communities or Oregon's economy will be able to bounce back from. We need our representatives to take action. Pass SB 282-1 and keep families like mine in our homes.

Thank you.

Brian
Albany, Oregon