



# community alliance of tenants

February 17, 2025

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

The Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), urges your support for HB 2967. CAT is Oregon's only statewide tenant-led renters' rights group. We serve thousands of tenants annually with education and referral services.

A consistent story that we hear is of tenants paying hundreds of dollars in application fees because of repeated denials, or failure of a landlord to return application fees when a tenant is not screened. As a result, tenants find themselves dipping into the funds reserved for the move-in costs. If a household does not have a generous amount of savings they can lose a potential rental offer resulting in moving delays or doubling up until savings are replenished.

These fees disproportionately affect marginalized communities and keep families trapped in unstable housing situations.

For example, tenants report discriminatory behavior based on race, national origin, and other protected classes which manifests as rental application denials and loss of rental application fees making them even more vulnerable to not finding housing.

HB 2967, would ban the charging of application screening fees when a tenant is applying to find a rental unit. The landlord would still be able to screen tenants as usual, but would not be able to charge this fee to the tenant. Instead, this would be a cost of doing business and handled the way other landlord expenses are handled – built into operating costs covered by rents. Banning application fees is an increasingly common approach in other states and removes the burden on tenants who sometimes have to apply to many units (and pay many fees) in this tight market before they can find a spot.

Landlords have little incentive to keep these fees low. Existing regulations make it difficult for tenants to enforce their rights. Eliminating these fees will help reduce barriers to housing and give renters a better chance at stability. To that end we urge you to support HB 2987.

Sincerely,

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