

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Re: SB 1523A

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Anderson, and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness:

My name is Liisa Salomaa and I work with Northwest Pilot Project as a Support Services Specialist. I am writing in support of SB 1523A based on both my professional experience working with low-income seniors and my personal experience as a friend to many who would greatly benefit from this bill becoming law.

While technological advancements have improved ease of access to housing for many, it is undeniable that increasing reliance on these technologies has simultaneously left others behind. SB 1523A provides protections to ensure that those left behind will no longer be denied access to housing simply because they cannot or choose not to access online housing platforms.

Most Oregonians know someone who, due to age, geographic location, disability, or financial means, are unable to reliably access the internet. Many Oregonians without internet access also do not have a support system of family, friends, or advocates available to assist them with filling out and submitting housing applications, making monthly rent payments, and accessing essential facilities when housing providers only provide digital means to do so.

While the existing reasonable accommodation process provides an avenue for disabled renters to seek non-digital means to obtain and enjoy housing, reasonable accommodations are not an option for non-disabled renters. This bill provides an avenue for all Oregonians, regardless of disability status, to access housing.

SB 1523A is a simple and common sense step towards protecting Oregonians' ability to secure and maintain housing in the digital age. Allowing renters to pay rent by means such as money order or cashier's check and submit housing applications and documents by paper expands housing access to some of the most vulnerable Oregonians, without placing an undue burden on housing providers.

I urge your support of this bill as a means to protect housing access for all Oregonians. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Liisa Salomaa