

Submitter: Kristen Bell
On Behalf Of: Home Forward Community Builders
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4123

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kristen Bell and I am writing on behalf of Home Forward Community Builders Program and tenants in support of HB 4123A, which will support Landlord Confidentiality, and Tenant Privacy of Information. This bill was negotiated with stakeholders and also had amendments in the House, and now has no known opposition.

Tenant privacy and confidentiality is important to me because it puts myself and community members at severe risk of having their personal information shared with entities that can be a bad outcome. Sharing personal information such as social security numbers and immigration status is risky with what is happening in our country today. This opens up risks of unfair treatment, unfair practices of laws and discrimination targeting BIPOC (Brown Indigenous Peoples Of Color) populations. Families are being jeopardized daily in the community I live in and the properties of low income properties. I've been a Community Builder with Home Forward for over a year and we strive to have healthy and safe and inclusive neighborhoods. We serve our small and large communities to try to empower our communities while advocating for one another and the rights of tenants.

In the course of applying for, securing, and maintaining housing, tenants and applicants share significant amounts of personally identifying, financially sensitive, and other private information with their landlords and property managers. It is well recognized that public disclosure of this type of data can put people at risk of theft, fraud, and other harms.

This legislature has taken important steps in many contexts to provide reasonable consumer protections against inappropriate disclosure of private information. However, there is currently no Oregon landlord-tenant law providing confidentiality protection for the sensitive information that landlords gather.

HB 4123A will add a clear and simple provision to Oregon's Landlord Tenant law, specifying that certain personally identifying, financially sensitive, and other private information may not be disclosed without the written consent of the tenant, unless in response to a court order.

The bill clearly defines the types of information that must be kept confidential, and specifies appropriate exemptions for business necessities like conducting background or reference checks, or as necessary for the landlord's use in any administrative, court, or collection actions. The bill also ensures that affordable

housing providers would be exempt from any contradictory requirements imposed by their local, state, or federal funders.

Privacy protections are urgently needed in housing, where we all want and deserve to feel safe at home. Tenants need to know their private information is secure. And landlords will benefit from having a bright line in the statute that will provide legal clarity, consistency and certainty.

For all of these reasons, we urge your strong support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Kristen Bell
Community Health Worker/Community Builder
Home Forward Tenant and Advocate