

**Rebecca Stavenjord
Milwaukie City Council**

10722 SE Main St, Milwaukie, OR 97222
stavenjordr@milwaukieoregon.gov

January 27, 2023

Senator Kayse Jama, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court Street, NE, Salem OR 97301

Honorable Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of Milwaukie City Council in support of SB 799 which will be heard by the Senate Committee on Housing and Development on Monday, January 30, 2023.

Housing availability and stability occupy a prominent place in the lives of Oregon's residents. Far too often, this adds stress to families who are desperate to provide a safe place for their children to thrive. The COVID19 pandemic only succeeded in exposing deep inequities and well-meaning stop gap tenant protections ended before true stability could be gained for our most vulnerable neighbors.

We know that those who have stable, quality housing experience the benefits of improved physical and mental health; increased access to education and job opportunities; increased social and community connections; improved safety and financial stability; and an overall greater ability to plan for the future. If evicted, residents may not have the resources or capacity to find new housing, they experience greater strain and stress within their families and mental health suffers. This reduces our community stability as programs and services are devoted to acute crisis rather than maintaining the ability to thrive. We experience a greater economic loss because responding to an emergency always costs more than preventing it in the first place.

We want to thank you for taking the time to consider permanent changes that reflect the lessons learned from the pandemic. It will take years to recover from COVID19 and our systems of support have been strained to a point where re-imagining our policies is a better solution than building back a broken system. We look forward to celebrating your leadership in this chapter of Oregon's evolution. As we struggle with reduced housing supply and lack of affordable housing stock, we appreciate that you are exerting bold leadership to address evictions as the public health concern they are. Systemic change and economic relief for renters that allows them to stay in stable housing benefits us all.

For residents who are accessing rental assistance programs, the process can be time consuming and complicated. Having additional time to navigate that process while applications are pending can make all the difference. Restoring non-payment timelines will reduce displacements as renters also struggle with reduced court operations. The 60-day period you're considering will allow time for rent assistance programs to process payments and this provides stability for landlords and property managers who can then maintain existing tenants rather than search for new ones.

On behalf of our constituents in Milwaukie who are struggling with housing stability, we appreciate your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

