

Submitter: Alex Wilkens
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2305

Dear Legislators,

Please vote "yes" on HB 2305. I have been a Property Manager for seven years, and a landlord for nearly 20 years in the great State of Oregon. I have a broad range of experience with tenants, and have watched the arc of landlord-tenant law changes over the past two decades.

In my experience, the vast majority of my residents follow the three rules of being a great tenant: pay rent on time and in full, take care of the property, and be a good neighbor. Since almost all of my tenants are great residents, many of the numerous law changes in the past 7 years have had little effect on my tenants or my management business, even though virtually all of the law changes have increased tenant rights. However, in every large group of people, there are a few folks bound to test the limits of appropriate behavior. Here I'm referring to tenants that perpetually pay rent late, denigrate the property, or are hard on their neighbors. There need to be reasonable legal avenues to end rental agreements when these repeated bad behaviors occur.

I view lease terminations and evictions as absolute last resorts, so I've only had a handful over the years. However, sometimes it is truly necessary to remove a tenant, if for no other reason than the protection of OTHER tenants. Sadly, the current slate of tenant protections enshrined in Oregon law is over-protective, and makes it difficult to remove problem tenants, even when any reasonable person would agree that it's time for them to find another place to live. Additionally, when delays drag on through the courts, more charges rack up in these tenant's ledgers, making it even harder for them to recover financially, which risks additional trips to small claims court, being sent to collections, bad rental references, and the like. This all adds up to making it harder for them to find housing elsewhere, and perhaps even spiraling into homelessness, which no one wants. I have a former tenant who was able to use the courts to create multiple delays to their termination, which racked up thousands in additional rent charges, which will follow them for years to come. Another tenant pays rent a month late every month, knowing they are "safe" under Oregon rules, but ultimately are just paying endless late fees, abusing housing assistance funds, and ruining their future rental references. Had these example tenants, who are good people otherwise, not spent their efforts sheltering under Oregon's umbrella of over-protective laws, they could have left under better circumstances, and made a fresh start elsewhere.

Please note HB 2305 would only apply to tenants demonstrating repeated poor choices. Landlords don't want to evict good tenants, but sometimes we need to remove the rare bad apple. This bill would help with the bad apples, and would provide some balance that would be good for tenants and landlords alike. Please support HB 2305.

Thank you for your time in considering my point of view.

Alex Wilkens
Property Manager