



March 3rd, 2025

Re: Support for SB 599

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SB 599, to ensure that all Oregonians have access to fair housing, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status.

The Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO) is a statewide civil rights organization that proactively promotes housing justice, equity, and inclusion. Our mission is to end illegal housing discrimination and promote equal access to housing choice through education and enforcement of fair housing law.

Historically and statistically, identifiable groups of people have received unfavorable treatment in housing transactions. In attempting to rent, buy, get a mortgage, or secure home insurance, they have been denied, harassed, given less favorable terms and conditions, or experienced a lower level of service than other groups. As a result, fair housing laws were enacted to protect against illegal housing discrimination based on “protected class status.”

National Origin is a protected class, and refers to a person’s birthplace, ancestry, language, and/or customs. It is illegal for a landlord to deny housing or treat someone differently because a) of a person's name, appearance, accent, or participation in customs associated with a nationality; b) the landlord incorrectly perceives the person as being associated with a particular nationality; or c) the person associates with people of a particular national origin.

While most housing providers already adhere to best practices and do not discriminate on the basis of citizenship or immigration status, passage of the bill ensures that these principles are codified in our state statutes and sends a protective and inclusive message to our communities.

The bill is modeled after a provision in [local ordinance](#) in the City of Portland that has been in effect for years, and extends that protection statewide, ensuring consistency of protections across all communities. Four other states have similar statewide protections. (NY, WA, CA, IL)

The bill will amend the Landlord-Tenant Act to provide that:

1. A Landlord may not inquire about, or disclose with intent to harm, a tenant or applicant's immigration or citizenship status;
2. Landlord must accept any of the following, or a combination thereof, to verify the name, date of birth and photo of the Applicant:
 - a. Evidence of Social Security Number (SSN Card);
 - b. Valid Permanent Resident Alien Registration Receipt Card;

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- c. Immigrant Visa;
 - d. Individual Tax Payer Identification Number (ITIN)
 - e. Non-immigrant visa;
 - f. Any government-issued identification regardless of expiration date; or
 - g. Any non-governmental identification or combination of identifications that would permit a reasonable verification of identity.
3. A Landlord may not discriminate against a tenant or applicant based on immigration or citizenship status.
 4. The bill would not apply to landlord compliance with federally subsidized housing benefit eligibility screening requirements.

SB 599 will help ensure that our neighbors' Fair Housing rights are not violated through illegal discriminatory practices. I strongly encourage your support for this bill.

Sincerely,



John Miller
Executive Director
Fair Housing Council of Oregon