



April 25, 2025

Oregon House of Representatives
Committee on Judiciary

RE: SUPPORT FOR SB 599A

Dear Cahir Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Fair Housing Council of Oregon IN SUPPORT of Senate Bill 599A. This bill would clarify for landlord that all Oregonians have the equal access to housing regardless of their immigration or citizenship status. This bill was amended by the Senate to address technical requests from Stakeholders, and comes to the house with bipartisan support. We urge this committee's support and swift passage, to ensure fair housing for all Oregonians.

Fair Housing Council of Oregon is the only statewide fair housing organization operating in Oregon. We educate housing providers on their fair housing responsibilities, arm housing consumers with know-your-rights trainings, investigate alleged violations of state and federal fair housing laws, and advocate on behalf of housing consumers facing discrimination.

State and federal fair housing laws already prohibit discrimination on the basis of national origin and on the basis of race. Because there is significant overlap between race, national origin, immigration and citizenship, it is considered best practice not to discriminate on the basis of immigration or citizenship, in recognition of the importance of compliance with fair housing laws. While many 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.

Besides resolving confusion on this matter, this bill is essential for providing housing stability to working families throughout the state. Left without explicit housing protections, they are vulnerable to bad actors who are able to use a family's immigration status and resulting lack of housing protections to extort concessions they are not entitled to. Families with non-citizen status frequently report being afraid to enforce their housing rights due to lack of protections, including their right to a safe home, the right not to pay illegal fees, or the right to due process in eviction cases.

We are not concerned that this bill would negatively impact the constitutional rights of property owners. State and federal fair housing protections for race, family status, disability, and other protected class identities have been held to be constitutional since their inception. Property owners that wish to exclude protected classes from their property have always been allowed to do so by taking their property off the rental market. As stated above, responsible housing providers already do not discriminate on the basis of immigration status as an acknowledged best practice.

1221 SW Yamhill Street, Portland, Oregon 97205



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)

There is significant confusion among housing providers, housing consumers, and community stakeholders on the line between national-origin discrimination and discrimination based on immigration status. Because of our role as educators and enforcers, we have watched firsthand as various parties with differing and sometimes competing interests struggle to comprehend the inherent relationship between these classes, what is legally prohibited, and merely considered a best practice. Everyone would benefit rendering that distinction irrelevant, and eliminating analytical guess-work.

The state has a compelling interest in protecting the housing stability for families that contribute meaningfully to the social and economic fabric of Oregon. This Bill would be a major achievement in furtherance of that objective. I encourage the Committee to approve this bill with all the enthusiasm I can muster!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Crawford".

Steven Crawford
Legal Director