

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Winsley Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan, Members of the Committee,

Re: Support for SB 282A, Tenant COVID Protections

Thank you for hearing my testimony on SB 282A. There are 89 thousand Oregon renters at risk of losing their home because of COVID-19. I am one of them. I am also strongly in support of SB 282A, which would provide the protections many of us need to stay safe and stable in our homes when the eviction moratorium expires.

Prior to COVID, I had been hospitalized four times for lung-related illnesses. I'm high risk and have not been able to do my work as a autism therapist technician for children and teens during the course of this pandemic. Initially, I kept paying rent with savings and started cutting down on other expenses but it all just added up. I started feeling desperate. Worried and anxious about rent, I've sold many belongings, everything I could. I'm 51 and I've been a renter my whole life and this situation is unprecedented.

The rental assistance I've been able to receive has been an absolute blessing ad I'm so grateful for the work legislators have done thus far to give us more time to get back on our feet. An estimated 11-16% of renters have fallen behind. SB 282A is just what we need. It will stabilize renter households by giving the \$500 million in federal rental assistance, in addition to the state assistance, time to reach landlords and resolve rent debt. This bill comes to you without opposition and with strong bipartisan support. It would give renters like myself and our landlords the time we need for the available funds to be distributed.

Without the time to access assistance, people are going to be living in tents and it's going to get worse and worse. Oregon has a history of displacing Black and working-class people of color. The COVID pandemic is already impacting low-income and communities of color at greater rates than the rest of the population and if we don't act now, this disparity will grow enormously. Plus, a credit hit from records during the pandemic could make it almost impossible to access housing the future. In a time like this, when we have all faced an enemy larger than ourselves—the pandemic—we must come together and help each other through.

Oregon lawmakers have come together time and time again during the pandemic to keep people safe and in their homes. SB 282A continues that critical work and I urge its swift passage.

Thank you.  
Jena Ruhiyyih Bagley  
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