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February 14, 2001

Representative Maxine Dexter, Chair  
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2001-1

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Helfrich, and Members of the House Committee,

We are writing in strong support of HB2001 and the -1 amendment. Preventing homelessness needs to be our shared top priority. HB2001-1 contains a set of vital protections and investments that respond to our current eviction and housing crisis and will help Oregonians of all ages stay housed and stable. We appreciate your commitment to moving this important policy package quickly this session and look forward to supporting a companion budget package as well.

In particular, HB2001-1 includes critical eviction prevention measures that make Oregon's statutes more reasonable and fair for tenants. These include:

- Expanding the time after a notice of nonpayment before being taken to court from 72 hours to 10 days;
- Requiring nonpayment eviction notices and court forms to include information about where to find rent assistance and legal assistance and provide access to translation of these forms;
- Amending first appearance and trial timelines to ensure that tenants have a greater chance of finding help before their hearing;
- Providing that an eviction case will be dismissed if payment is made before final judgment;
- Making the default judgment process more equitable; and
- Streamlining the eviction sealing process for those who qualify, which removes a significant barrier to securing housing.

With rents increasing up to 14.6% in 2023 and pandemic eviction protections fully phased out, Oregon has seen a drastic increase in evictions. According to a study from PSU, "Eviction rates fell close to zero in the early months of the pandemic and rose to over 50% of historical average in July 2021, towards the end of the CDC Moratorium, surpassing historical average in June, August, and September of 2022." With even higher rent increases in 2023, we expect this number to continue to increase.

Several of the emergency protections that were proven effective during the pandemic are included in this bill, along with essential additions to our eviction statutes. The bill helps ensure people are aware of and have additional time to seek rent assistance and legal services to prevent eviction for nonpayment of rent. By providing more reasonable timelines and provisions, the bill also makes significant progress toward addressing barriers that tenants, rent assistance providers and legal services across the state have been facing to avoid eviction in cases where rent assistance funding could be accessed.

The eviction-related measures in this HB2001-1 must be paired with increased resources for rent assistance and staff capacity so that local communities can respond to these requests. Additional

resources will increase the likelihood that renters facing eviction for nonpayment of rent can have a more successful outcome than losing their home.

HB2001-1 also includes important changes and investments to prevent and reduce youth homelessness. Among these are expanded services and host home programs. In recent years, Oregon has had one of the highest rates of youth experiencing homelessness in the country. In the 2019-20 school year, there were over 21,000 homeless school age youth in the state's K-12 schools. Our youth deserve safe and stable places to live and grow up. Supporting them now increases both their immediate and long term wellness and success. Investment upstream in youth stability prevents adult homelessness. The Oregon Alliance reports that 2/3 of youth who are homeless for as little as 3 months go on to become homeless as adults.

We at Multnomah County support HB2001-1 and ask that you take this critical step to address our eviction and housing crisis, as well as preventing further unnecessary homelessness across the state.

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Contact: Stacy Cowan [Stacy.Cowan@multco.us](mailto:Stacy.Cowan@multco.us)