



TO: House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

FR: Ira Cuello-Martinez, PCUN

RE: Support for HB 2001

February 14, 2023

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

On behalf of PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union, please accept this testimony in strong support of HB 2001, which is an important element of the response to our housing crisis. The bill ensures a focus on youth homelessness prevention, provides innovative approaches to addressing housing supply barriers and contains critical measures to help prevent eviction-caused homelessness. We appreciate the bipartisan and bicameral work that has been done to bring this bill forward.

We are particularly writing to urge support of Sections 14-26 of HB 2001, which contain essential and reasonable negotiated improvements to Oregon's eviction statutes to promote stability and payment rather than displacement and eviction. These Sections of the bill:

- Expand the time after a notice of nonpayment before being taken to court from 72 hours to 10 days.
- Provide that nonpayment eviction notices and court forms should include information about where to find rent assistance and legal assistance, and provide access to translation of these forms.
- Provide that an eviction case will be dismissed if payment is made before final judgment.
- Streamline the eviction sealing process for those who qualify for sealing, removing a procedural barrier to future housing stability.

Farmworkers and Latinx working families often face housing instability due to the increasing rent rates. During the pandemic, the most commonly sought-out resource by our members was financial support to help cover their expenses. Despite being deemed essential workers, many farmworkers cannot afford to pay their rent and they rely on multi-family housing situations.

People are living on the edge financially. According to state economist Josh Lehner, more than 50% of Oregon renters do not have enough money left over for food, medicine, and basic necessities.¹ When people on the edge get evicted, it is all too easy to fall into homelessness and housing instability.

We believe that HB 2001 is a fair approach that gives people who are behind on their rent a reasonable amount of time to catch up and, if they need it, locate, apply, and receive rent assistance. Reducing evictions is an essential part of our housing and homelessness response.

PCUN urges you to support HB 2001.

Ira Cuello-Martinez
Policy and Advocacy Director
PCUN

¹ <https://twitter.com/lehnerjw/status/1602829423988068352>