



3 February 2026

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislature

Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

RE: Senate Bill 1523

My name is Jimmy Jones, and I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) in Salem. We serve low-income residents of Marion, Polk, and nine other counties across Oregon. Annually, MWVCAA administers more than \$80 million in services and direct assistance supporting housing stability, homelessness response, energy and weatherization, and early learning programs for tens of thousands of Oregonians. Through this work, we see firsthand how unnecessary barriers, particularly administrative and technological barriers, can undermine otherwise effective housing systems.

I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 1523, a practical and accountable response to the digital divide.

As housing systems increasingly rely on digital tools, many tenants and applicants are being left behind. Lack of reliable internet access, limited familiarity with technology and the absence of smartphones, particularly among seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income households can make it difficult or impossible to meet basic housing requirements. When essential functions such as paying rent, applying for housing, or accessing one's home are available only through digital platforms, the risk of housing instability increases. These challenges often result not from unwillingness to comply, but from systems that are not designed to work for everyone.

Senate Bill 1523 takes a practical, low-cost approach to addressing these challenges by preserving access to existing, proven alternatives. This bill does not require new technology, staffing or programs. Instead, it maintains the option to pay rent by check or other commercially available methods, apply for housing on paper, and use non-digital keys to access homes and essential facilities, the bill promotes fairness, reliability, and equal access. These options are not new or burdensome. They are existing tools that many housing providers already use effectively. By reducing dependence on single-point digital systems that may fail, charge fees, or create data-entry errors, the bill helps prevent costly disputes, late fees, and unnecessary evictions. These outcomes benefit both tenants and housing providers by reducing turnover, legal costs, and strain on courts and emergency services.

Housing stability depends on systems that are responsive, reliable, and accessible to the full population they serve. Senate Bill 1523 strengthens those systems by ensuring that progress does not come at the expense of vulnerable Oregonians. It maintains flexibility for landlords, avoids one-size-fits-all mandates, and relies on tools that are widely in use. By focusing on access and functionality rather than creating new regularity layers, the bill supports better performance and more predictable outcomes across the housing system.

For these reasons, I urge your support for Senate Bill 1523. Thank you for you the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued service to Oregon Communities.

Respectfully,


Jimmy Jones
Executive Director