



January 30, 2023

Senator Kayse Jama
Chair, Senate Housing and Development Committee
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

We strongly urge you to pass SB 799 as quickly as possible as part of the Homelessness Prevention Package that includes \$100 million in new rent assistance, SB 611 / HB 2733 to limit the exorbitant and abusive rent increases too many landlords are imposing this year, and the Rental Market Data Bill for greater transparency into this essential component of Oregon's housing availability.

My name is Luke Barnard and I serve as a volunteer and organizer with the Eugene Tenant Alliance. Eugene Tenant Alliance is a political action committee composed of representatives from various tenant building unions and allied organizations fighting for political power for renters in Lane County.

Renters facing evictions at the Lane County Courthouse have different experiences than renters facing eviction at the Multnomah County Courthouse. In counties like ours, eviction trials can happen much sooner than in the Portland Metro Area due to less scheduling concerns. SB799 addresses this by setting clear timelines statewide, regardless of scheduling need, that allow the people we represent to seek and prepare adequate defense in court. This concept is one of fundamental fairness, a core value shared by many in our state.

While there are no national or local statistics of how many evicted people experience homelessness, surveys in several communities say that between 12-37% of people who have been evicted became homeless at some point, or say eviction was a cause of homelessness. Even at the most conservative estimate, if 12% of the 2,000 eviction cases this month alone experienced homelessness, that increases our current crisis by 240 households statewide.

People are living on the edge financially. [According to the state economist, more than 50% of Oregon renters do not have enough money left over](#) for food, medicine, or basic necessities. When people on the edge get evicted, it is all too easy to fall into homelessness.



Meanwhile, according to tax returns, even during the Pandemic, the number of Oregonians earning more than \$500,000 increased more than 11% in 2020 and nearly tripled over the past decade. COVID-19 caused unemployment that peaked at 14% and left renters without work for long periods of time.

On average, landlords filed evictions against Black women renters at double the rate of or higher than their white renters in Oregon and in 16 other states, according to the ACLU's Women's Rights Project and Data Analytics team.

Communities already facing historical and systemic barriers to jobs, housing, health care, opportunity and wealth are paying an unfair price for Oregon's unfair and rushed eviction laws.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 799 as quickly as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Luke Barnard
Member
Eugene Tenant Alliance