

Submitter: Richard Wisner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB599

04 February 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senate Bill 599

Dear Chair Senator Prozanski, Vice-Chair Senator Thatcher and members of the Committee:

Sponsors and supporters of this bill obviously believe there is something inherently wrong with inquiring into a person's legal status in Oregon before they are entrusted with signing a legal contract with a housing provider. There can only be one reason for that thinking, that the housing provider may—for good reason—decline to rent to such a person. So what?

If someone has already entered the country illegally does that reflect on their trustworthiness? Does that suggest they are a good risk for following the laws of our state or nation? Does that indicate they would follow a rental agreement?

Always there's a hue and cry about "all Oregonians" having a so-called "right" to one thing after another. But there's also an old saying; "Just because there's a mouse in the cookie jar, doesn't mean it's a cookie." Similarly, just because someone is living in the state—illegally—doesn't mean they're an Oregonian.

The last few years it's as if housing providers are being singled out for one hindrance after another just for wanting to provide a much needed service. Supporters of this bill want to make it more difficult for small mom & pop housing providers to make a living, but apparently that's okay. Seems to be all about the tenants. Providers are left out in the cold.

If the owner of housing property wants to know the immigration status of anyone seeking to rent from them in order to make an informed decision on whether a potential tenant is a risk or not, there is no valid reason to deny them knowing the answer. Simply saying it's to stop some discrimination—real or imagined—is just their opinion. Having a bias is part of being human. People discriminate over many things. This is just another one of those things.

This bill is merely more obeisance to tenants and tenant's rights groups at the expense of those who supply housing. This is a bad piece of legislation.

Thank you,
Richard Wisner