



AFSCME Support
For SB 282-1
Local 3135
Home Forward

March 8, 2021

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum and members of the Committee,

My name is Jackson Clarke and providing support for LSB 282-1 as both a member of AFSCME Local 3135 at Home Forward and as a landlord of two properties.

In my work as an assistant property manager with Home Forward, I have seen firsthand how the pandemic has strained the residents and added pressure to the need for stable and secure housing.

Maintaining housing stability for people in our state is a critical step towards weathering the storm of Covid-19. Even before the pandemic, the waitlist to get a spot in Home Forward managed subsidized housing in Multnomah county was tragically long- often upwards of two years. This, combined with an intense scarcity of low income housing in the conventional market, puts an alarming number of Oregonians in a very precarious position. For many people- there is nowhere to fall back. Due to the economic and social disruption of Covid-19, many people are far behind on their rent and are currently unable to catch up. On top of this, many people's social networks have been strained or shattered and spare rooms and couches they could once rely on for emergency housing are no longer available to them. People's lives are constructed around their homes. In a time when every other aspect of many people's lives are falling apart, we must do everything we can to protect one of their most basic needs- housing.

The provisions in SB-282-1 keep the rug from being pulled out from under vulnerable people's feet as we all begin to recover - economically, socially and emotionally from the pandemic.

Keeping landlords from being able evict tenants from rent that remains unpaid during the moratorium will allow for individuals and families to remain secure in their housing as they are able to regain employment and hopefully our affordable housing supply increases. Ensuring



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that credit checks exclude the time during the moratorium will help people access housing for years to come instead of being saddled with additional fees or being denied housing during a time when too many have been without income and financially stability.

As a landlord, I share the worry about the future. I believe that given the establishment of the fund that recently came online, the legislature knows that more must be done to ensure that good landlords are able to help maintain our much needed rental market. I believe that the provisions in SB 282-1 provide the needed “rules of engagement” to ensure that people aren’t punished for a time when they were given respite but also for landlords to begin to collect rent going forward.

I see this as a moral imperative to not only give families and individuals the much needed stability that housing gives. We know that we cannot expect kids to learn, adults to work and people in need of supports whether mental health or substance use services or other human and health services to live healthy and successful lives is impossible.

On behalf of AFSCME Local 3135 and myself I urge you to pass SB 282 and the -1 amendments.

Than you,

Jackson Clarke,
Member
AFSCME Local 3135 - Home Forward