

Submitter: Blake Claiborne
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2967

To Whom It May Concern:

Many parts of Oregon, which certainly includes Salem where I live, have major issues with the affordability of housing. As someone who has dragged my family out of homelessness in the face of wildfires, I am appalled at how much companies are charging just to put an application in. It makes it impossible for a low-income person to put in more than a very few applications at a time, which may very well just be rejected, and causes far more of a strain on their finances than it does to a rental corporation who is collecting most of that money not in exchange for any product or service, but simply because they've all decided to do it.

Being homeless and/or housing-insecure is far more expensive than people think it is. You can work a full-time job- and many more than you think do!- and still not be able to get into a rental around here. It's not even because of wages; many people could reliably pay rent but are forced to take spare rooms, or shady deals, or live in a hotel that costs way more than rent would. Truthfully, the process of applying, of having to prove you've never experienced hardship in the past three to ten years or sometimes ever, of having to make an income far over the median for the region, and of having to pay several thousand dollars up front you won't get back no matter how gentle you are with the place, of them finding every way they can to add charge after charge... it's a nightmare. The idea that so many of these opposing testimonies seem to focus on is that people will otherwise go around putting in housing applications "frivolously" like it's some kind of cool new TikTok prank, and I am genuinely confused whether any of them even truly believe that, and if so what they think other people do all day.

This bill is a very simple way of fixing one of the many problems with housing in Oregon. It's good for both the economic health of the state as a whole, and the literal health of its people. It should not be controversial. If the cost of making sure you only accept "perfect" tenants is so obscene, maybe these landlords should look into forcing these third-party services to stop upping their prices, but it is not feasible to keep shoving the cost onto the average citizen.