



House Committee on Housing & Homelessness

**Testimony in Support of SB 1523 A-Eng**

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AARP is pleased to support SB 1523 A-Eng. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50+ to choose how they live as they age. AARP Oregon advocates on issues important to our 500,000 Oregon members with a focus on health security, financial resilience and livable communities. **This bill advances key AARP principles on consumer protection, housing security, and digital equity.**

In considering this legislation, it's worth recognizing the sweeping demographic shift here in Oregon and the implications for older Oregonians. 25 years ago, for every 100 children under the age of 19, there were just 50 older Oregonians age 60+. But in the last 25 years, there has been a profound change. Now older Oregonians *outnumber* children and 27% of our population is over the age of 60. And the strongest growing contingent are those 85 years and older.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, in recent years, there has been a significant shift towards using digital technology for various aspects of daily life, including accessing forms and applications, on-line payment portals and even our homes. While this technological advancement offers convenience for many, it also poses substantial challenges for those who may not be tech-savvy or who do not own the necessary electronic devices. This can include older Oregonians, those with cognitive or physical disabilities, lower-income Oregonians, those transitioning out of homelessness and those living in rural areas with unreliable broadband service.

SB 1523 A-Eng. is a common sense approach to these realities. This bill ensures that tenants cannot be forced to use digital tenant portals for essential housing functions such as submitting applications, verifying identity and signing documents. Instead, it requires landlords to provide equivalent nonelectronic alternatives. This provision ensures that modernization does not create barriers to housing access.

Allowing payment through other than electronic means recognizes that not everyone may have a credit or debit card or other means to make electronic payment, not everyone has the means or the willingness to pay the extra fees often associated with electronic payment and not everyone is comfortable storing their sensitive financial information in online systems.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/das/oea/Documents/OEA-Forecast-1225.pdf>

This provision also prohibits landlords from issuing late fees or threatening termination when a tenant offers payment by check or other reasonable non-electronic methods. Renters, including older Oregonians, should never face housing insecurity simply because they choose the safest, most familiar payment method available to them.

Finally, SB 1523 A-Eng. builds on work that AARP did with Rep. Gomberg last session. AARP supported HB 3378 (2025) which prohibits requiring a tenant from using their personal electronic device to access their apartment building or unit. While some tenants may welcome that option, others may not have the necessary device or ability. We appreciate the update to include all common areas or common facilities that the tenant has access to.

In sum, SB 1523 A-Eng. protects Oregonians, including older Oregonians, from digital exclusion, ensures equal access to housing services, prevents penalties tied to non-digital communication and promotes fairness and safety to all Oregonians so they can safely age in place.

For these reasons, we urge passage of SB 1523 A-Eng.