

Testimony in Support of Fair Housing for All (SB 599)
Juan Pedro Moreno Olmeda
March 5th, 2025

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Juan Pedro Moreno Olmeda, I live in Hillsboro Oregon and I am writing in support of SB 599, to ensure that all Oregonians have access to fair housing regardless of their documentation status.

As a first-generation Mexican-American, I have experienced the challenges faced by those labeled "undocumented" by our government, especially in housing. I remember visiting my father's coworkers and seeing multiple mattresses across the small apartment. At that age, I did not understand that there were multiple people living in that apartment. I simply thought the mattresses were for the wrestling matches my brother and I would have. This overcrowding is just one issue impacting our community.

Another big problem in our community is the exploitation of undocumented individuals by landlords.. My own family has personally experienced this: An uncle of mine was renting a home in Hillsboro Oregon in hopes of becoming the homeowner with no legal contract or official document. After having paid the mortgage, my uncle was kicked out of the home instead of becoming the homeowner. This experience is all too common among those lacking legal status and/or legal contract. To address these issues, we must implement safeguards that protect undocumented individuals from exploitation and discrimination in housing, ensuring they feel secure in applying for housing without fear.

While most housing providers already adhere to best practices and do not discriminate on the basis of citizenship or immigration status, passage of the bill ensures that these principles are codified in our state statutes and sends a protective and inclusive message to our communities.

The bill is modeled after a provision in local ordinance in the City of Portland that has been in effect for years, and extends that protection statewide, ensuring consistency of protections. Four other states have similar protections. (NY, WA, CA, IL)

The bill will amend the Landlord-Tenant Act to provide that:
A Landlord may not inquire about, or threaten to disclose a tenant or applicant's immigration or citizenship status;

A Landlord must accept any of the following, or a combination thereof, to verify the name, date of birth and photo of the Applicant:

- a. Evidence of Social Security Number (SSN Card);

- b. Valid Permanent Resident Alien Registration Receipt Card;
- c. Immigrant Visa;
- d. Individual Tax Payer Identification Number (ITIN);
- e. Non-immigrant visa;
- f. Any government-issued identification regardless of expiration date; or
- g. Any non-governmental identification or combination of identifications that would permit a reasonable verification of identity.

3) A Landlord may not discriminate against a tenant or applicant based on immigration or citizenship status.

4) The bill would not apply to landlord compliance with federally subsidized housing benefit eligibility screening requirements.

As someone who has seen the struggles of my loved ones firsthand, I am deeply committed to advocating for the rights of undocumented individuals in securing safe and fair housing opportunities. I hope you will also advocate for this community, who really needs our support now more than ever.

We urge you to please strongly support SB599I. Thank you so much for the opportunity to submit testimony on this topic

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Sincerely,

Juan Pedro Moreno Olmeda