



HB 3974 - Testimony to House Committee on Rules

June 3rd, 2025

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazen, Vice-Chair Pham, and esteemed members of the House Committee,

My name is Hannah Alzgal and I am writing on behalf of Unite Oregon - an organization made up of and led by immigrants and refugees, communities of color, people experiencing poverty, and rural Oregonians. We are united in our shared belief of building an intercultural and cross-cultural movement to advance justice in the most critical areas of our societies, including housing. We are 45,000 members strong across Oregon, with County Chapters in the Portland-Metro and Rogue Valley.

We write to urge your support for HB 3974, which rightly addresses a long unchecked and unregulated part of the rental housing market. Rental application fees range vastly from landlord to landlord, without clear documentation as to why for these spectrum of fees other than prices fixed upon the landlord's decision. The exploitative cycle of fees is one more problem that our tenants do not need - they need cost relief if we want to see an Oregon that is thriving economically and culturally. Through Unite Oregon's Housing Referral Program, we have members who have reported shelling out anywhere between \$200-\$400 in rental application fees, all resources in limbo while they await a response. For the majority of Americans, \$400 is what they have on average in emergency savings to cover sudden and unexpected expenses. Being out of that without clear recourse for refunds means we are setting people up for homelessness, hunger, medical issues, and overburdening debt.

These cost burdens are not equally borne onto all prospective tenants. Black and Latinx tenants are twice more likely to apply to five or more housing units than white tenants. If we want to see Oregon thrive for all through equity-based policies, reducing this cost burden is how to alleviate the struggle for housing for more Black, brown, immigrant, and refugee households. With freed up funds, our families can put them towards life-saving essentials: food, clothing, education, and healthcare. We would be able to boost our local and state economy when people have the means to spend again.

HB 3974 takes us in the right direction to having housing be accessible, affordable, and fair for all. Passing this policy will help tenants cover other vital costs and remove one less hurdle in the journey to safe shelter. We urge you to support HB 3974.

Sincerely,
Hannah Alzgal

Housing Justice Policy Coordinator
Unite Oregon
hannah@uniteoregon.org