



## House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

February 17, 2025

### **HB 2967, Prohibits residential landlords from charging an applicant screening charge**

Testimony submitted by:

**Britt Conroy**

Director of Public Policy

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO)

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Britt Conroy, and I serve as Director of Public Policy for Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. EMO is a statewide association of congregations, denominations and interfaith partners, connecting us with 750 faith communities across the state.

While we are proud of this network, it is the Oregonians EMO serves in our four housing programs that compel us to support HB 2967, which would prohibit residential landlords from charging an applicant screening charge.

- EMO secures housing for recently arrived refugees who are starting new lives after fleeing persecution and violence.
- We partner with Cascades AIDS Project to secure housing for those with HIV and AIDS who are experiencing homelessness.
- We provide emergency and long-term housing for survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are members of Oregon's Slavic community.
- And we secure housing for Oregon youth who are experiencing homelessness and who are alone, separated from their parents.

We know from our work on a daily basis that application fees represent a financial barrier to housing. These charges make it more difficult to leave a mold-infested apartment. These

fees are a barrier to a survivor of domestic violence leaving a dangerous living arrangement. And these charges make it more difficult for families experiencing homelessness once again place a roof over their heads.

In fact, in 2023 EMO had the privilege of partnering with many of you to create an OHCS emergency housing assistance and rapid rehousing program that, among other things, pays the rental application fees for families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

While helpful for the families served by that program, the state General Fund will simply not be able to fully address the very real barrier represented by application fees.

HB 2967 would help these families and many other housing-vulnerable Oregonians. EMO urges this committee to support this bill.

Thank you.