



AFSCME Support For SB 282-1

March 8, 2021

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum and members of the Committee,

My name is Kevin Cronin, president of AFSCME Local 3267, Homes for Good - the Lane County Housing Authority. I am providing this testimony in support of SB 282 and the -1 amendments.

In my day job at Homes for Good, I work on the intake team for public housing and section 8, working to get people housed. This has become an increasingly difficult job because the need far outpaces the supply and too often even if they do qualify for assistance, the waitlist is tragically long. Every day, I spend 2-3 hours a day returning phone calls of folks who are interested in the programs that we offer. Some of these calls are families that are rent insecure, not currently served by our programs, where the only thing standing between them and homelessness is the current eviction moratorium and the landlord compensation program and passed last session and other rental assistance . Once someone falls behind on rent, it can create a spiral of debt and it can become incredibly difficult for them to catch up and keep themselves and their families housed and without spiraling further into debt.

The financial assistance passed by the state and the new assistance coming from the American Rescue Plan are going to be a lifeline for the people I serve. But I also know from first-hand experience that it will take time to get those dollars out the door to get the rent paid.

It would be a tragedy if even one Oregonian was evicted after the moratorium ends on June 30, 2021 because they were not able to access rent assistance in time. Passage of SB 282 will ensure that no one gets evicted because of delays in rental assistance.

Here's how SB 282 will help the community I serve:

- 1. Prevent evictions for people who have fallen behind on their rent during the pandemic.** By extending the grace period through February 2022, we can ensure people have enough time to access the current and incoming rental assistance or pay back the rent on their own if they are able.



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2. **Protect people's rental and credit history so they can rent in the future.** No one should have their ability to rent in the future put at risk because they fell behind during a global pandemic that decimated low-income communities.
3. **Temporarily extend COVID protections for retaliation through the grace period.** We must ensure that people behind on their rent don't face unfair evictions or harassment.
4. **Temporarily lift occupancy limits** so families and individuals displaced by wildfire don't put friends or family at risk if they shelter them during this difficult time.

Our communities have long been struggling to meet the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. Without the provisions in SB 282-1, too many people will be at continued risk beyond the foreseeable future continuing the pressures on our incredibly strained services and supports. Oregon's renting families have hung on this long. They just need a little more time and a little more grace from the state legislature to ensure they can stay safe and stable as Oregon starts to recover.

Please pass these protections in SB 282 -1.

Sincerely,

Kevin Cronin
President
AFSCME Local 3267 - Homes for Good