



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

February 13, 2024

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB 1530, which will make adequate investments in rental assistance and eviction prevention to prevent homelessness in Oregon.**

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am testifying on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49, which together represent over 87,000 people. Local 49 represents private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing, and healthcare workers; while Local 503 represents homecare workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and state and local government employees.

We believe that every Oregonian should be able to afford rent and have access to a place they call home without having to put in jeopardy their ability to pay for food, child care, transportation, health care, taxes, and other necessities. Unfortunately, more than half our renters cannot afford basic necessities after paying rent since the current cost of housing is unsustainable for working families and BIPOC Oregonians—who are more likely to be renters due to systemic barriers to housing. This financial burden on our renters has resulted in Oregon having one of the highest rates of homelessness in our nation.

With a sharp spike in high-rent homelessness, it's urgent that the legislature invest in proven prevention strategies that keep Oregonians housed. At current levels of need, the funds previously allocated will be gone by July of this year. The legislature must fully fund the Stable Homes for Oregon package included in Fair Shot's People's Budget which has had a proven track record of keeping working Oregonians safe and stable.

This package includes:

- \$45 million in rent assistance through community action agencies and community-based organizations.
- \$6.5 million to the Urban League of Oregon for culturally specific housing stability services.
- \$6 million to the Home Fund at Oregon Worker Relief for housing stability services for immigrant Oregonians.
- \$2 million for outreach services for residents of expiring affordable housing units.

86% of eviction filings are for nonpayment, against people who have fallen behind on their rent. There are close to 2000 eviction filings a month. The availability of rent assistance for tenants in the critical time of need will help ensure that landlords get paid, evictions are avoided, and most importantly, Oregonians stay housed.



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SEIU Oregon urges the Committee to support SB 1530.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos
Political and Government Relations Organizer
SEIU Oregon State Council