



Date: January 30th, 2023
To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development
From: Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for the Urban League of Portland
Re: Support to Reduce Evictions and Prevent Homelessness, SB 799

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 799. My name is Jennifer Parrish Taylor, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Urban League of Portland. The Urban League of Portland is one of Oregon's oldest civil rights and social service organizations, empowering African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security, and quality of life across Oregon and SW Washington.

We can all agree that the city and the state is facing a crisis when it comes to affordable housing. It is an issue not only for those who are low-income, who are cost-burdened, and at risk of losing their homes as housing prices continue to reach record highs, but for those most vulnerable in our communities, the chronically unhoused. According to the "Recommendations of the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities in Oregon" report to the Oregon State Legislature, a task force I currently chair, the data shows that in Oregon, "people who identify as Black or African American are 2% of the total population, 4% of those in poverty, and 6% pf those experiencing homelessness. In other words, the percentage of Black people experiencing homelessness is 3 times their share of the total state population.¹" Additionally, we know that evictions and rent hikes create disproportionate harm to BIPOC communities, that Black women in Oregon are twice as likely to face eviction and that BIPOC Oregonians are more likely to be renters because of systemic barriers to housing and employment.

For many, housing in Oregon is too precarious, unaffordable, and many are one life event away from not being able to cover monthly necessities such as rent; we must look at ways to keep currently housed Oregonians in their homes in the face of skyrocketing rent. In a most recent report from Forbes Home, which took data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. department of Housing and Urban Development, Oregon ranks ninth highest in the country when it comes to rental prices. For example, rent for a Portland one-bedroom apartment has risen by 34% since last year and taking into "account the average yearly income for Oregon residents, which was just over \$60,000 dollars in 2021, renters are putting 25% of their paychecks toward rent for their apartment or house."² Couple the exorbitant rents that we're seeing and the increase of eviction court filings due to non-payment of rent to 68% from last year's 48% and you have a worsening housing crisis looming.

¹ ["Findings and Recommendations of the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities in Oregon", January 2022, Pg. 15.](#)

² ["Oregon Rent Prices Among the Highest in the Country, Report Finds," Joe Raineri \(KGW\), January 23, 2023.](#)



Urban League
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We need solutions to keep people housed not just in the metro area, but statewide. We strongly urge you to pass SB 799 as quickly as possible as part of the Homelessness Prevention Package that includes \$100 million in new rent assistance and SB 611 to limit the exorbitant and abusive rent increases too many landlords are imposing this year. SB 799 helps ensure that the action lawmakers took during the pandemic to reduce evictions and keep people safe and stable in their homes are continued and strengthened. Please support SB 799 and the life saving measures within.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Parrish Taylor

Jennifer Parrish Taylor
Director of Advocacy and Public Policy
Urban League of Portland
Portland, OR 97227
Phone: 503.280.2600 ext. 609
Fax: 503.281.2612