DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT/DISTRITO 10

OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, State Senator from District 10, which includes South Salem, West Salem, Monmouth, and Independence. I would like to add my support to HB 2680, which would amend requirements for residential landlords accepting an applicant screening charge, requiring landlords to provide a notice of applicant rights, a confirmation of screening, while specifying the time period of fee return and increasing the penalty for violating these requirements.

Rental application fees are one of many barriers that tenants in Oregon experience in searching for affordable housing. Application fees are charged by landlords to run background checks, and often cost $50. This means that applicants who apply for multiple units can be charged hundreds of dollars per financially responsible adult, all without knowing whether they will secure the housing unit. This state of affairs is not sustainable for many renters, adding significant costs to the process of securing housing.

HB 2680's requirement that landlords provide a notice of applicant rights in regard to the application fee, as well as a confirmation of applicant screening, means that applicants will know when their fee should be returned to them, increasing landlord accountability. When landlords owe applicants a refund, HB 2680 stipulates that this refund must occur within 14 days, preventing landlords from using a vague timeline to avoid paying applicants what they are owed. Finally, HB 2680 addresses reports of late or nonexistent application fee refunds and increases landlord accountability by increasing the penalty for violating these requirements.

HB 2680 would take much-needed action to ease the financial burden attached to finding and securing affordable housing in Oregon. I urge your aye vote.

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