



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2639
State Representative Tina Kotek, Speaker of the House

Fairness for Voucher Holders

- Amends ORS 659A to clarify that “source of income” nondiscrimination includes federal rent subsidies and any other local, state or federal housing assistance, thereby giving voucher holders the chance to apply for all available rental opportunities.

Support for Landlords

- Permits landlords not to rent to voucher holders based on past rental history and ability to pay rent. -7 makes language clarifications that won HUD approval for demonstrating substantial equivalency to federal fair housing laws.
- Creates a statewide mitigation fund to stand behind landlords if tenants damage property. The -7 increases the amount of money a landlord can recover from 2.5 times their monthly rent up to \$5,000 and it clarifies that landlords can recover for unpaid rent and other damages, not just property damages.
- Encourages timely housing inspections, leases that match standard and customary lease lengths for the unit in question, assistance with service referrals, and establishing a process that allows landlords to provide regular input to housing authority. The -7 requires that any actions taken by a local Housing Authority be consistent with federal law.

Support for Housing Authorities

- Directs the state to pursue a statewide federal waiver to give local housing authorities more flexibility in administering the program.
- Forms a Statewide Housing Choice Advisory Committee to share best practices and develop strategies to improve outcomes.

Increased Accountability

- Requires local housing authorities to report program data to the state.
- Requires the Housing and Community Services Department to report to the Legislature and integrate program goals into the statewide affordable housing plan. The -7 switches the reporting entity from OHCS to the new Statewide Housing Choice Advisory Committee to more directly link the programs performance to the legislature.

Expanded Short-Term Rental Assistance

- Creates the Stable Rental Housing Program to provide rental assistance to help people to achieve or maintain housing stability.