



TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
FROM: Ron Garcia, President
Rental Housing Alliance Oregon
RE: Support for SB 794
DATE: March 20, 2017

Since 1927 the Rental Housing Alliance Oregon has set the standard for community participation by landlords providing affordable and quality housing. Quality affordable housing options for Oregonians have been one of our organization's primary goals. From education of landlords to participation in state and local housing efforts to ongoing support of housing non-profits and homeless organizations, RHA is dedicated to housing issues in Oregon.

For quite some time, RHA has advocated among our peers for a tenant assistance program that helps tenants with financial needs and paying rents and other expenses. Often, a life-changing event will happen that causes a tenant to be in an altered financial situation. They need help prior to that problem becoming so large that they spiral into homelessness. Fact is, while landlords often help tenants in need, the mortgage still needs to be paid, so abilities become limited over time. Landlords care, tenants are in dilemma - both need help resolving the situation.

A tenant assistance program is a better option for tenants, landlords and taxpayers than other options now being considered. This type of innovative assistance is certainly more sustainable, reasonable and contractually fair than legislation that implements rent control, deletes no-cause termination of tenancy rights, requires landlords to pay relocation costs, or lifts the preemption on local governments.

The Rental Housing Alliance Oregon has more than 1,900 members, 62% of whom own just 1-4 units and 81% of whom own 10 or fewer units. We are the small landlords in Oregon. We often want to do more to help our tenants, but our smaller operating and revenue numbers make it difficult. SB 794 has the potential to help all involved in the rental community.