

Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE:** Coronavirus Rent Relief Package

Dear Co-Chairs, Roblan, Holvey, and Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response:

Amid all the urgency the coronavirus has caused, I appreciate your consideration of my concerns regarding the Coronavirus Rent Relief Package. I am among the many in my local community who are worried about the consequences this crisis will have on both their financial health and their physical health.

I attend graduate school at Oregon State University and have rented in Corvallis since 2016. My ability to instruct online enables me to continue my work and to earn a living during the coronavirus pandemic. For many throughout the state, certainly throughout the nation, that ability has evaporated overnight. Naturally, every renter will immediately ask, in dread, “*How will I pay rent?*”

It is imperative that this aid goes to those acutely vulnerable to the financial consequences of this pandemic—Renters. Property management companies (PMCs) will implore lawmakers to divert emergency aid into their hands, away from those in most desperate need. Rent is paid by renters for a habitable place to live. Utilities, trash disposal, recycling services, maintenance, and other repairs are typically paid by renters, also. Most PMCs have gone remote and have limited repairs to emergencies only. This means a tenant may be responsible to fix his own maintenance problem to keep his home in a habitable condition. Paying this emergency rent assistance directly to the renter ensures that rent can be paid, that food can be purchased, and that renters can remain secure in their homes.

Current rental assistance programs like Section 8 are unique and not comparable to emergency aid distribution during a pandemic and an economic shut down. Many families are now with little options for child-care if they must leave home for work. Many are expected to work remotely on their personal electronic equipment. We are all struggling to keep our lives together, especially those only an emergency away from homelessness and financial ruin.

Recently, the US Department of Labor has stated clearly the 70,000 initial unemployment insurance claims during the week of March 14, 2020 “are clearly attributable to the impacts of the COVID-19 virus. A number of states specifically cited COVID-19 related layoffs.”<sup>[1]</sup> The rent relief package before you should act as a lifeline for those who are most likely to live paycheck-to-paycheck. Giving this aid to PMCs provides neither immediate nor secure relief to the public, who are already financially strained. Renters paying their rent ensures people remain secure during this crisis. Please, ensure this help gets to those who are in most urgent need.

Sincerely,

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<sup>[1]</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. (2020, March 19). *Unemployment insurance weekly claims*. [News release] Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf>