

Co-Chairs President Courtney & Speaker Tina Kotek, Co-Vice Chairs Sen. Girod and Rep. Drazen, and members of the committee,

Re: Support for LC 18, extending eviction moratorium and the rental assistance program

My name is Kaïa Austin and I work for Metropolitan Family Service where we serve low and moderate income Oregonians. Thank you for taking up this bill to protect renters. I am writing to express my support for this bill as essential for the health and well being of the people we serve. Passing this bill is imperative for our community to avoid a wave of displacement and homelessness that would have a devastating impact on families and individuals.

While the vaccines bring us all hope, we know that COVID-19 isn't ending on December 31, and if anything things are worse now than they were a month ago. Until the pandemic ends and things get back to normal, we must continue to provide protections for families and individuals that have suffered economic harm during this very difficult year, many of whom are the frontline workers whether in hospitals or grocery stores, who are making it possible for us to get through this. **The eviction moratorium should be extended through June of 2021 to help families get through the school year.**

Our Black and Brown neighbors are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from the COVID evictions. Discriminatory housing policies have made homeownership difficult and inaccessible, leaving people of color at higher risk of rental evictions even as higher rates of COVID exposure are leaving people ill and economically stressed. **The winter surge of COVID cases brought reduced economic activity and new layoffs and hours reduction. Even before that happened, according to September research by PSU and Community Alliance of Tenants, 47% of Oregonians were using credit cards or borrowing money to meet their basic needs and 53% have cut back on paying for food or medicine to pay rent.**

Oregon's renting families have hung on this long. We cannot take away their lifeline now. We promised Oregon renters that they wouldn't lose their homes during the pandemic. We need to keep that promise.

Thank you,

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Kaia Austin (she/her/they/them/ella) | Economic Empowerment Program Coordinator
Metropolitan Family Service | www.metfamily.org
1808 SE Belmont Street, Portland, OR 97214
(503) 232-0007 ext. 121 | cell: (503) 820-8004



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