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December 17, 2020

Testimony in Support of LC 18

Extending the Evictions Moratorium and the Rental Assistance Program
Submitted by Courtney Helstein, Political Director for Family Forward Oregon

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LC 18. Family Forward Oregon is committed to advancing policies that support families and help them succeed, both in the workplace and at home. We work to ensure that Oregon is a place where all families can be economically secure and have the time they need to take care of each other. We believe having a safe and stable home is a critical component to every family's success – it impacts a family's safety and security, their children's educational outcomes, and contributes to economic stability for the entire family. Stable housing is even more critical during a global pandemic where the safest place for people to be is at home.

Our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) neighbors are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from the COVID evictions—it is no different when it comes to the impacts of the pandemic on their housing security. A recent study showed that while tenants continued to pay rent from April into summer, as many as 35% of those surveyed owe back rent. That number increases to 56% for people of color.¹

The pandemic is also having disproportionate economic impacts on women. Approximately 865,000 women ages 20 and over, including 324,000 Latinas and 58,000 Black women, dropped out of the workforce in August and September alone. Women accounted for about 80% of workers that were forced out of the workforce this fall, largely due to job loss and/or needing to care for their children.² If they lose their homes through eviction, not only will they have a permanent record, but families with children who are hanging on by a thread through remote learning will have that thread cut.

¹<https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/sites/g/files/znlldhr1791/files/2020-09/Renters%20in%20Covid-Oregon%20summer%202020.pdf>

² <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/september-jobs-fs1.pdf>



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LC 18 is a reasonable approach to protecting Oregon renters from eviction and provided needed financial assistance to renters and landlords during the pandemic.

- **We strongly support the \$200 million package in this bill.** There should be a landlord compensation fund that helps smaller landlords with back rent so they won't have to evict if they are financial straits, and also a rental assistance fund to help those tenants who will need assistance moving forward or whose landlords don't apply for the fund.
- **The eviction moratorium should be extended through June of 2021 to help families get through the school year.** Families need stability to provide for their childrens' education. Oregon already has one of the highest rates of student homelessness in the country. We cannot force families whose children have been learning remotely to lose the stability they require to support their education during a pandemic.

Even as vaccines begin arriving in Oregon, we know that COVID-19 will not end on December 31st. We must continue to provide protections for families that have suffered economic harm during this very difficult year.

We believe that every family in Oregon should have access to a stable and secure home, especially during a global pandemic.

We urge your support for LC 18.