



# Native American Youth and Family Center

5135 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland, OR 97218 | p 503.288.8177 | f 503.288.1260 | nayapdx.org

December 18, 2020

To: Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, Vice-Chair Girod, Vice-Chair Drazan, Members of the Joint Interim Committee on the Third Special Session

RE: LC 18 – Support

Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, Vice-Chair Girod, Vice-Chair Drazan, Members of the Joint Interim Committee on the Third Special Session. For the record, my name is William Miller, I am Blackfeet and Cherokee and I serve as the Advocacy Manager with the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) located in Portland, Oregon. NAYA's wraparound programs directly serve over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impacts more than 10,000 Native Americans living in Portland's growing Native American community a year. Today, I am writing in support of LC 18.

On March 15, 2020, NAYA made the tough decision to transition staff to a remote workforce. However, given our heightened constraints during COVID-19, we have been able to provide nearly \$1M in housing dollars to support clients during the pandemic. Our organization is not only an affordable housing provider, but we also support to community members through short and long-term rental assistance. This has continued to allow for the prevention of evictions despite financial constraints pertaining to COVID-19. LC 18 provides increased protections for renters while providing financial support to stop what could become mass evictions once we see an end to the pandemic.

Recently, one of our clients came to NAYA for support after their hours were cut at work resulting from COVID-19. This single father of four fought hard to win back custody of their four young children after the tragic death of their mother. The father worried about losing his children again if he could not afford their rent payments. After becoming nearly \$6,000 behind on rent and feeling they were at risk of losing their housing, the client reached out to NAYA for help. Our organization was able helped this client using CARES funding, provided gift cards which allowed the family to pay other past due bills, and provided the family with access to food and other resources that they had not had previously. With NAYA's help, this family was able to avoid eviction and maintain their housing stability. This is one example of how critical resources could be the lifeline for families in our community. With continued resources such as the passage of LC 18, our families



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can stay housed despite our ongoing global crisis. LC 18 will continue to allow us to provide resources to community, protecting renters from eviction, and ensuring we safeguard housing stability through the pandemic.

On behalf of the Native American Youth and Family Center we urge your support of LC 18.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

William Miller  
Advocacy Manager