



December 17, 2020

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

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin and I am the Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director of Our Children Oregon. Our Children Oregon was launched in 2020 through the merger of Children First for Oregon and The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon. Our mission is to be a voice and a force for the common good of all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities needed to reach their full potential. Our Children Oregon focuses improving child well-being through legislative and policy solutions, research and data that elevates the needs of children and youth in Oregon, and child abuse prevention.

Thank you for considering LC 18. We strongly support this bill as stable housing is essential for the health and well-being of Oregon's children and to avoid a wave of displacement and homelessness in our state that would have a devastating impact on children and families.

We support the \$200 million package named in this bill. The landlord compensation fund will help smaller landlords with back rent to avoid evictions of tenants, and the rental assistance fund will help those tenants who will need assistance moving forward or in the case where their landlords do not apply for funding. Both funds are key and necessary components.

The foundation of well-being for Oregon's households with children is being shaken as the COVID-19 pandemic threatens all levels of our well-being. Too many families with children were struggling before this pandemic and now many more face devastating hardship and instability—with housing among the greatest concerns.

Data from the KIDS COUNT 2020 policy report, [*Kids, Families and COVID-19: Pandemic Pain Points and the Urgent Need to Respond*](#), released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation this week shows that nearly a quarter (24%) of Oregon adults in households with children reported having felt down, depressed, or hopeless in the previous week, exceeding the national estimate of 21% and over one in 8 (13%) reported slight or no confidence they could make their next housing payment. Even more recent data from week 18 of the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey shows



22% of families with children reporting that they may not be able to pay next month's rent.

Our Black and Brown neighbors are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from the COVID-19 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 Household Pulse Survey reports that 30% of Oregon's Black renters are at risk of eviction because of concerns they won't be able to pay next month's rent.

Families need stability, now more than ever, to provide for their children's education. Oregon already has one of the highest rates of student homelessness in the country, with rural Oregon counties having among the highest rates of student homelessness. We cannot force families whose children have been learning remotely to lose stability, internet connection, and the ability to keep their education going in the pandemic.

The eviction moratorium should be extended through June 2021 to help stabilize families to get through the end of the school year.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Chris Coughlin
Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director