

Testimony Regarding Legislative Concept 18: Eviction Moratorium and COVID support

I am a long-time volunteer for St. Andrew Catholic Church Emergency Services in NE Portland. We provide rental, utility, and food support to struggling people in our neighborhood. We help dozens of families each month with rent and utilities.

It has been suggested that going forward the state may extend the moratorium but require tenants to sign a written statement that they have been negatively impacted by Covid-19. **I urge you not do this.** You should instead continue the universal protection that has been in place since early in the epidemic. Many people in our immigrant community will have great difficulty signing such a written statement, fearing that it will negatively impact their immigration status. That is presuming, of course, that the requirement to do so would be communicated to them effectively, which

I can assure you that everyone who is coming to us has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Even if they have no one in their family who is infected, every family has seen their financial position deteriorate due to loss of family income. All have been struggling very hard to keep up with rent and utilities, but they are very far behind with very poor prospects of being able to catch up anytime soon. The cost of supporting the landlords to enable rent forgiveness without danger to their own mortgages may seem daunting, but it pales in comparison to the economic, societal and moral cost of putting overwhelming numbers of people out on the streets through a loss of the universal eviction moratorium. Please act to extend the eviction moratorium. As you consider a path to rent forgiveness, please pay close attention to the voices of tenants and small landlords, who are at greatest risk.

David Fikstad

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