

Dear Co-Chairs President Courtney and Speaker Kotek, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Girod and members of the Committee.

My name is Jackson Clarke and I am here today to provide support for LC 18 as both a member of AFSCME Local 3135 at Home Forward and as a landlord.

In my work as an assistant property manager with Home Forward, I have seen firsthand how the pandemic has strained the residents and added pressure to the need for stable and secure housing. While I am proud that my employer has internally extended the eviction moratorium until the end of 2021, I know that this is not financially feasible for many other housing agencies and landlords. Maintaining housing stability for people in our state is a critical step towards weathering the storm of Covid-19. Even before the pandemic, the waitlist to get a spot in Home Forward managed subsidized housing in Multnomah county was tragically long- often upwards of two years. This, combined with an intense scarcity of low income housing in the conventional market, puts an alarming number of Oregonians in a very precarious position. For many people- there is nowhere to fall back. Due to the economic and social disruption of Covid-19, many people are far behind on their rent and are currently unable to catch up. On top of this, many people's social networks have been strained or shattered and spare rooms and couches they could once rely on for emergency housing are no longer available to them. People's lives are constructed around their homes. In a time when every other aspect of many people's lives are falling apart, we must do everything we can to protect one of their most basic needs- housing.

As a landlord, I also support this program. I would reiterate that the ethical considerations already mentioned are equally applicable to conventional housing but beyond that, I see this program as directly beneficial to private landlords. I think that one of the greatest concerns private landlords may have is finding themselves unable to pay their mortgage or balance their books without rental income and being unable to evict their tenants and seek compensation. I think that LC 18 strikes a conciliatory middle ground by allowing landlords to seek reimbursement for 80% of any income they may have lost. This both protects their financial interests and saves them from the frustrations and complications of pursuing an eviction in court- their other option.

On behalf of AFSCME Local 3135 and myself I urge you to pass this legislation. I welcome any questions and look forward to more work to help our most vulnerable and at risk members of our communities in the upcoming legislative session.

Jackson Clarke