

Thank you for allowing me to publicly testify, below is a transcript of my testimony

LC-18 Testimony 12/17/2020

Good evening Co chairs president Kortney and speaker Kotek, and members of the committee

My Name is Jason Miller, I am the Legislative Director for the Oregon Rental Housing Association.

Small businesses are the backbone of Oregon, like many small businesses Housing Providers are struggling to stay afloat in 2020.

Housing Providers have been required to provide an essential service while accepting late payments or no payment at all.

They have experienced a complete or partial loss in income while continuing to spend money they may not have to keep Oregon residents in safely housed.

Expecting eventually that help will come and they will recoup this delayed income with no interest or late fees.

LC-18 commits funds for rental assistance to help Housing Providers recoup delayed income but also requires them to forgive 20% of all past due rents.

Often Housing Providers operate on slim margins with net profits below 20%. Some housing Providers have needed to borrow money or defer payments to stay afloat avoiding foreclosure or bankruptcy.

Housing Providers are acquiring interest and late fees on top of missed payments and borrowed money adding to the compounding debt that they will eventually have to pay.

Housing providers, like everyone else, are only asking to be paid in full for their services they provide.

Are other industries being required to forgive balances due? Is there any requirement to forgive taxes due? I suspect no. This seems like unequal treatment towards an often-targeted industry.

The Oregon Rental Housing Association cannot support any rental assistance bill that includes rent forgiveness.

Our recommendation is to remove rent forgiveness from LC-18 and allow tenants 6 months after the emergency period to pay back the 20% balance due.

Additional funding could be allocated in the regular session for other programs that can assist tenants unable to pay the 20% or Housing Providers could be given tax credit options.

We would like to see monthly declarations of need made by tenants to qualify for eviction protection.

We would like the 72hr and 144 hr notice timelines to be unaltered.

ORHA requests a requirement for tenants intending on submitting a declaration of need to do so before the first appearance of an eviction proceedings to qualify for eviction protection.

In conclusion we ask you do what is necessary to protect one of Oregon's most important industries and do not pass LC-18 as written.

Jason L. Miller

Legislative Director, Oregon Rental Housing Association