



DEVELOPING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

December 17, 2020

Joint Interim Committee on The Third Special Session of 2020
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Co-Chairs President Courtney and Speaker Kotek, Co-Vice Chairs Sen. Girod and Rep. Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Karen Saxe and I work at DevNW, an affordable housing development and counseling agency serving Lane, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Marion and Clackamas counties.

DevNW provides financial, rental and homeownership education and counseling throughout our four offices to low and moderate income individuals and families. Our clients have been severely impacted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Many are employed in industries that felt the first wave of unemployment and many more are feeling the economic fallout of the public health crisis. This is especially true for BIPOC and other historically marginalized communities, who are facing deeper, more immediate impacts.

Renters throughout our communities are making difficult financial decisions, between paying rent or putting food on the table. With little support, families are navigating school, child care and parenting all within the same home. More than one in five families with children who rent their homes say they may not be able to pay next month's rent. Oregon already has one of the highest rates of student homelessness in the county. As unemployment support ends, and the financial trade-offs are even greater, homelessness must not be the next thing facing these families.

It is imperative that the Legislature acts to support struggling renters throughout Oregon by extending the eviction moratorium and providing rental assistance as outlined in LC 18. This action makes sense. It protects Oregon renters through June 2021 and supports landlords who are doing their part to protect tenants from homelessness. As an affordable housing and service provider we know that a wave of

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evictions in January, in the middle of a pandemic, will be disastrous for all communities in Oregon.

We thank you for all that you've done to support Oregonians throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, for stepping up and showing state leadership when federal action has been insufficient. We urge your support of LC 18 to extend the eviction moratorium and provide rental assistance to ensure Oregon families maintain their housing stability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KSaxe".

Karen Saxe
Director of Financial Wellbeing

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