

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 Kim Lemman and I am here on behalf of St. Francis Shelter and we serve homeless families with children in Marion and Polk counties. Thank you for taking up bill LC-18.

We strongly support this bill to avoid a wave of displacement and homelessness in our state that we have no ability to deal with and that would have a devastating impact on families and individuals not to mention on our communities and our state.

We, again, strongly support the \$200 million package in this bill. There should be a landlord compensation fund that helps smaller landlords with back rent so they won't have to evict if they are financial straits, and also a rental assistance fund to help those tenants who will need assistance moving forward or whose landlords don't apply for the fund. In order to keep our housing market functioning, we must provide relief to both landlords and renters.

- The safest place for people to be in a pandemic is safe at home. Families and individuals will be at higher risk of COVID if they lose their homes and our communities will have increased spread of this terrible disease.
- Families with children are at high risk:
 - 22% say they may not be able to pay next month's rent.
 - If they lose their homes through eviction, not only will they have a permanent record, but families who are hanging on by a thread through remote learning will have that thread cut.
 - Families need stability to provide for their children's education.
 - Oregon already has one of the highest rates of student homelessness in the country.
 - 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.
- Here is what's at stake. The [most recent data shows](#) that in Oregon between 27,700 households face risk of eviction if the moratorium isn't extended with an estimated rent shortfall of between \$155 to 274 million. The \$150 landlord compensation fund and the \$50 million tenant assistance package will go a long way to ensuring that families can stay safe in their home during the COVID pandemic until we have more vaccines for everyone.
- Under the current law, people could start losing their homes as soon as January 11th and at that point under current projections, we won't have enough vaccines for everyone and we will still be in a suppressed economy. The Oregon Department of Justice earlier this month testified that January will bring an immediate filing of 14,000 non-payment cases. These tenants will lose unless the eviction moratorium is extended.
- In addition, the crisis of displacement due to the wildfires has reduced the already severely limited housing stock available to rent and those who lose housing due to an eviction would be at a severe disadvantage in securing other housing if the moratorium is lifted.

- Lifting eviction moratoriums increases COVID illness and death. Until there are vaccines for everyone, the best prevention during the pandemic is a safe place to stay, which is why eviction moratoriums were put in place. Incidences of COVID-19 have risen in states that lifted moratoriums at 2.1 times the rate of states that maintained them. Deaths increased by 5.4 times.
- Oregon's renting families have hung on this long. We cannot take away their lifeline now. We promised Oregon renters that they wouldn't lose their homes during the pandemic. We need to keep that promise.