

Subject: Yes (with additional protections) on LC 18

Co-Chairs President Courtney & Speaker Tina Kotek, Co-Vice Chairs Sen. Girod and Rep. Drazen, members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Megan Kidd and I live in Portland. I am one of the hundreds of thousands of Oregonians who is a renter and has either struggled financially during the COVID pandemic or have friends and family who have struggled. Thank you for working to extend the eviction moratorium and provide funding for rent assistance so that my friends, neighbors and loved ones do not pay the price of surviving this pandemic for the rest of their lives. I have been lucky enough to have stayed employed full-time without losing income, but many of those I personally know and love have not experienced such luck.

Without the eviction moratorium, Oregonians would have experienced evictions, displacement, school dropouts, houselessness, positive COVID cases, and deaths like nothing we have ever seen before. We, tenants, and our families and children continue to need protection from eviction for non-payment of rents, retaliation and harassment by landlords, and insurmountable rent debt that will impact our ability to get safe, stable housing in the future. None of this is our fault, yet we are being treated as if the struggles imposed upon us are an affront to those who own the roofs over our heads and hold the keys to our futures. The truth is, the overwhelming majority of Oregon renters are keeping up with their rent despite the pandemic, job losses, and shut down communities. But many of us are doing so by cutting back on food, medication, using savings and credit cards. Assistance must be there for those who need it and we all know how fast those funds are depleted and how many renters are left without any help. Rent assistance is not enough!

COVID-19 isn't ending on December 31. Protections for people like me shouldn't either.

The eviction moratorium should not only be extended through June 2021 to help families get through the school year, but it should be extended until we are all able to safely resume what were our normal lives (if that is even possible).

While I can support a landlord compensation fund that helps smaller landlords with back rent to help stabilize the housing market, I believe it is equally urgent to help renters moving forward and not just with rent assistance that won't go far enough. We need to eliminate the rent debt of folks that have not been able to pay their rents due to the pandemic. There will not be enough money to cover all of it and this debt will impact folks for years to come. This impact is sure to spill over to even the most financially insulated and secure in our state, and nation.

If folks get an eviction on their records it will make it almost impossible for them to find housing and families will suffer the effects of that for years to come. In addition, our Black and Brown neighbors are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from the COVID evictions. Discriminatory housing policies have homeownership difficult and inaccessible, leaving people of color at higher risk of rental evictions even as higher rates of COVID exposure are leaving people ill and economically stressed. In a time like this when we are all facing an enemy larger than ourselves - this pandemic - we must come together and help each other through so that the impacts don't last a lifetime.

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 and I urge you to pass even stronger protections than what LC 18 contains.

Sincerely and in earnest,

Megan Kidd