

December 13, 2021

Testimony in Support of Keeping Oregonians Housed

Co-Chair's Beyer and Fahey, Vice-Chair's Knopp and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Daniel Hauser, Director of Strategic Policy Projects at the Oregon Center for Public Policy, and I respectfully submit this testimony urging you to seize the opportunity provided by this Special Session to pass legislation that help people pay the rent.

Oregonians, and especially renters of color, have been through a challenging and fraught two years. Immediate losses of employment at the onset of the pandemic transitioned into confusing waves of federal, state, and local aid that were well-intentioned but often inadequate. This body has had to correct course multiple times along the way, and more adjustments are needed to protect Oregon's most vulnerable renters.

Seize the opportunity the Special Session brings to advance further investments and policy adjustments to ensure Oregonians aren't pushed out of stable and safe housing this winter. There is a clear step to do this: **Pass legislation to help people pay their rent.** Invest in continued access to rent assistance for tenants with low incomes until new federal resources become available.

Lawmakers should also take common-sense steps to adjust program protections and deadlines to fit the moment. The safe harbor period included in SB 278 (2021) should be expanded to ensure tenants who have applied for assistance are protected until their application has been considered. The 10-day notice period for nonpayment evictions is a necessary provision, and it should be extended further.

Oregonians in need of assistance have applied for help, and no one should be evicted while their application is being processed. We urge you to invest further in rent assistance and protect our neighbors from eviction.