

December 11, 2021

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

My name is Christy Hernandez. I am living in a Salem area motel with my three sons after being evicted from my home. I loved my home and I am so sad to leave it. It was a safe place to raise my children and now it is gone.

I am speaking out because the state must do a better job keeping the promises they make. I don't think I would be in this situation if my rent assistance had come in time. I lived for months with the threat of eviction over my head. It was terrifying and now the worst has actually happened. It took more than 10 months for my rent to be paid. I applied through a local agency before the state portal opened. The stated cause for the eviction was that the owner wanted to move in but I think my landlord just got fed up.

Now I will have to come up with funds to rent a new home and I don't know how I am going to do that. I do not know how long we will be able to stay in this hotel. Our lives have been thrown into chaos. We didn't ask for this. We have done the best we can during the pandemic after being thrown out of work but I feel we have been abandoned by the state.

Please keep the safe harbor protections in place so that no one who has applied can be evicted while they wait for assistance. Please ensure rent assistance is funded to meet the needs of people like me. And please do all you can to improve the rent assistance process. I know a lot of people applied for help at once but I hope that now the bugs can be worked out and with a longer safe harbor period, people can get money faster and when there are delays, they won't have to worry so much.

Thank you.