

Testimony to the Joint Interim Committee on the Second Special Session of 2021

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

My name is Maryanne Kelley and I am one of the thousands and thousands of people who are still waiting for rent assistance to come. My safe harbor period has expired after applying for assistance in May of this year. I applied for three months plus utilities through Oregon Coast Community Action. I've just gotten frustrated and basically given up.

I've felt helpless and unheard. I already felt bad having to ask for help and apply for assistance to begin with but when they don't help you and you qualify, it just feels like I've been forgotten. The only reason I've been able to pay what I have is because of Section 8, otherwise I'd have been evicted a long time ago. I have a disability application pending (preexisting conditions) but I've had to work part time to stay on top of utilities and things but even then, I wasn't earning enough to pay everything. I've had to borrow and it's been really really difficult. I have been homeless before and am terrified of being homeless again.

I am an in-home caretaker and the pandemic was very difficult for me. I have diabetes so it puts me at higher risk of infection. When Covid first I started paying my rent months in advance in case I lost my job but I couldn't keep up after I was only working two days a week.

I feel great empathy for the people who have been evicted - thrown out of their homes - because they applied for help that didn't come in before the arbitrary deadline of the safe harbor period. I hope you do as well and will extend the protection through the entire time their application is pending.

Thank you.