



December 10, 2021

Joint Interim Committee on the Second Special Session of 2021
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of the Housing Safe Harbor Bill

Dear Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Fahey, and members of the joint committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon). We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 28,000 members statewide. **We urge you to support emergency rental assistance in the Housing Safe Harbor Bill.**

The COVID-19 pandemic and financial crisis intensified socio-economic injustices and housing instability faced by BIPOC, low-income, and other vulnerable communities. As community members struggled to stay afloat, the eviction moratorium and rent assistance funds allowed families and individuals to stay in their homes. However, the pandemic has not ended and it continues to impact thousands of Oregonians who face the threat of losing their homes.

The Legislature must act to avoid a wave of displacement and homelessness that would be devastating to families and individuals across the state. In order to do so, legislatures must pass emergency rental assistance that:

- **Continues to provide funding for tenant rent assistance and for the landlord guarantee fund in the interim until new federal resources are available.** The Legislature promised to provide relief to communities across the state, and the failure to deliver on that promise will harm families across Oregon.
- **Modifies SB 278's safe harbor period to ensure the entire rent assistance application period is covered, including the extension of the sunset provision for protections.** Tenants need to be protected until their application is considered regardless of their application date.
- **Extends the sunset provision to a 10-day notice period (as opposed to 72 hour) for nonpayment evictions, including updated notice to tenants regarding eviction process and rent assistance resources.** This provision facilitates Oregonians access to resources that are designed to prevent displacement and homelessness.
- **Expands and extends the current 60-day landlord guarantee fund to cover any period of time if a landlord delays eviction** and a tenant is ultimately denied assistance or is given less than owed when the case is closed. An extended period of time for the landlord guarantee fund will remove the risk landlords face in working with tenants; this will support landlords in working with tenants to continue housing stability while tenants access assistance.

The ACLU of Oregon urges you to support the Housing Safe Harbor Bill with the provisions above during this special session. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Respectfully,

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