



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

Support Housing Safe Harbor Bill (LC 9) Joint Interim Committee On The Second Special Session of 2021 December 11, 2021

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

On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, I urge passage of the Housing Safe Harbor Bill (LC 9). **Access to safe and stable housing is essential for all survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Oregon. Housing instability and homelessness increases the risk of experience violence and abuse. Passing the Housing Safe Harbor Bill will mitigate this risk.**

The mission of SATF is to advance a multi-disciplinary, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence in Oregon. Our goal is to prevent sexual violence from happening in the first place, while simultaneously improving our response efforts to mitigate trauma and ensure the safety and security of all victims.

In the 2021 session, SB 278 passed with broad bipartisan support so that individuals and families wouldn't be evicted while they waited for state and federal rent assistance to get to the landlord. Due to overwhelming demand, statutory changes are necessary to implement that goal. The government has promised relief to thousands of households, and we need to ensure that promise is kept.

We urge passage of the following:

- Provide new funding for continuing access to rent assistance for tenants with low-income through the winter months until new federal resources are available, and for the landlord guarantee fund.
- Modify SB 278's safe harbor period to cover the entire application period, and extend the sunset on protections. Tenants who have applied for assistance should be protected until their application has been considered, and either granted or denied, no matter when they apply.
- Extend the sunset on the current 10-day (as opposed to 72 hour) notice period for nonpayment evictions, coupled with updated notice to tenants about eviction process and where to find rent assistance. This is a common-sense provision that works to facilitate access to available resources designed to prevent displacement.
- Expand and extend the current 60-day landlord guarantee fund to cover any period of time (not just 60 days) if a landlord delays eviction and a tenant is ultimately denied assistance or receives less than is owed when the case is closed. This removes risk for the landlord in ensuring tenant stability and access to assistance.

No one should be evicted for nonpayment while their rent assistance application is being processed. We must act now to prevent the unnecessary and tragic generational harm that comes from eviction and displacement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MS', written in a cursive style.

Michele Roland-Schwartz
Executive Director
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