

TO: Joint Interim Committee on the Second Special Session of 2021  
FROM: Leann Knapp, on behalf of Oregon Food Bank  
RE: **Vote YES on LC 9 to Prevent Hunger & Evictions**  
DATE: December 11, 2021



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

My name is Leann Knapp (she/her) and I write to you representing the Oregon Food Bank. At Oregon Food Bank, we know that **hunger is a symptom of harmful policies and systems that create barriers for people to thrive**, and that we can only end hunger for good by tackling its root causes. That is why our mission is clear: we must act to address the inequality, racism and oppression that create serious disparities in all areas of life- including housing.

Over the last year and a half, the Legislature has taken action to protect Oregon renters and keep more people in our communities housed. But our communities are still deeply feeling the economic impacts of the pandemic, and **our work is not over until we achieve a recovery where every Oregonian is able to emerge stronger**. Right now, we are facing a stark reality that stands to increase hunger in every corner of our state if not addressed immediately:

- Nearly 8,000 Oregon households have lost their eviction protections as they continue to wait for their rental assistance applications to be processed.
- Another 24,000 families inch closer to the end of their safe harbor period each day.
- Our state's rental assistance program has allocated all of its funds and is closed to new applications.

**By passing Legislative Concept 9, you have the power to keep Oregonians in their homes.** It will ensure continued eviction protections and access to rent assistance for those who apply for it in the coming months and **prevent the generational harm caused by displacement**.

Addressing this crisis is a matter of racial equity. Because of centuries of systemic inequities and historical and clearly-documented discriminatory housing policies, **Black, Indigenous and other Oregonians of Color are more likely to rent their homes, and have sought rental assistance at higher rates**.

No Oregonian should suffer lifelong consequences because of delays in receiving assistance. No one should be without a roof over their head. **Oregon Food Bank strongly urges you to extend Oregon's safe harbor protections and make much-needed investments in rental assistance funding by passing Legislative Concept 9.**

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