

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read my perspective on the special session called by our Governor. My interest is in the latest rental assistance proposal. Let me take you on my journey of the past 20 months enduring our government's attempt at executing their rental assistance program.

I am the proud owner of Capital Property Management housing 2000 residents. I have been operating my business in Multnomah County for 31 years and currently employ 52 individuals who are charged with maintaining and providing services to these properties and their residents.

Since March of 2020 me, my staff, property owners and residents have been hanging on every word coming from our legislators as we tried to figure out what would come of those residents who could not pay their rent because they lost their jobs, were indefinitely furloughed and were suffering from other related covid challenges.

As we waited nervously, we watched our legislature pass HB4401, SB282 and SB278. Each designed to buy more time for the government to organize a means to disburse federal rental assistance funds. We accepted these regular changes as we had no choice. Here we are with the goal posts moving yet again with no end in sight. The proposal provides for a hard safe harbor end date. Really? How many of these hard end dates and eviction moratoriums have been extended? Speaker Kotek has a track record of not keeping her word. This will prove to be another proposal that will add to her track record of broken promises.

Late December 2020 it is announced the State would provide a means in which to pay both renters and housing providers for rents that were deferred. The program opened up late January 2021 under the now infamous Allita 360 program. Since launching unsuccessfully in early 2021, Allita has been nothing but a colossal failure and has had issue after issue with the victims being the renter and housing provider. This software program was chosen without other software programs being considered. There was no other request for proposal. The sounding bell was sounded each and every month since the debut of this program from all housing organizations, with countless written complaints to the head of OHCS, our Governor and her housing policy leaders. Who has been hurt in this process of turning a deaf ear and not finding an adequate solution to disbursing these funds expeditiously? Renters and property owners.

One of my staff members whose job title was accounts receivable has morphed into a FULL TIME ALLITA 360 trouble shooter and renter advocate trying to navigate the most onerous renter application and property owner application process one can imagine. Yes, I mentioned renter advocate. Contrary to what you believe, this IS what we do. Helping our residents get assistance when the agency was incapable of providing answers to the residents in need. They could not even navigate their own program! I encourage each member to complete this 27 page application and see how you fair. My best wishes to all of you, as you will not be able to complete it.

The headlines from many of you, are claiming the need to extend safe harbors to renters to keep them housed because there would be a flood of evictions if this was not extended. In the past 20 months we have filed ONE eviction. Does this sound like a wave to you or a crisis? Did

you know that eviction filings are well below pre pandemic numbers? Is this a housing crisis OR perhaps is this an internal crisis with leaders who are attempting to save their political careers? This special session was designed to bury the real issue...an agency who has misled, mismanaged and failed to make decisive decisions when they were in over their head. Top down, the leaders have failed renters and property owners but now try to spin a story that is all about keeping renters and the most at risk housed.

This is not a policy issue, this is an agency failure. Extending safe harbors is not the answer. Getting competent people in positions to do so IS the answer. In the private sector, I can assure you these people in charge, would have been terminated for incompetence. Between bounced checks issued by the agency to property owners and the continued waiting period for renters to feel secure in their homes, is this a policy issue or a systemic agency failure?

Our industry has been a convenient demon and target for several years . We HOUSE PEOPLE, we do not go out of our way seeking to get rid of the very people that provide us our livelihoods. What part of this do you not grasp?

As elected officials your constituents ask you to do the right thing. Fix the agency and change its leaders who have been negligent with this crucial responsibility. If you really care about renters and keeping them housed , then ask yourselves, why are you being called to a special session? The money is there and has been there for months BUT our leaders have not.

Respectfully,

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President

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