



**Testimony in Support of LC 9**

**Cristina Palacios, Unite Oregon**

**December 11, 2021**

Co-Chairs Beyer and Fahey, Co-Vice Chairs Knopp and Breese-Iverson, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Legislative Concept 9. My name is Cristina Palacios and I am the Housing Director at Unite Oregon. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our 33-thousand members, many of whom are renters. Our organization is led by people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty, as we work across Oregon to build a unified intercultural movement for justice.

Just 9 months ago we were in a similar position testifying in support of Senate Bill 282 explaining, and I quote, “Not only do our communities need more support but we need the funding for greater capacity to quickly distribute the relief funds. We need more time and our members need more protections to recover from this setback.” It has been 7 months since the legislature agreed that we needed state rental assistance and eviction protections. That said, the extent of our needs were overlooked and so the state was not prepared for the demand in capacity, funding and protections and so we find ourselves here today, testifying in front of you again for the same needs and hoping to receive a better solution.

Since the application became available, over 30,000 applicants have patiently waited to receive their assistance, many of which have gone beyond the 60 day safe harbor. There have also been nearly 2,300 nonpayment evictions filed in Oregon courts. We can’t afford to evict another family from their home, we can’t afford to leave our families outside in freezing temperatures, we can’t afford to lose more workers because they do not have a safe place to sleep and get cleaned up, we can’t afford to damage the mental health and intelligence of our youth, our next



generation, but what we can afford is to pass Legislative Concept 9. We have the opportunity to increase rental assistance funds by \$215 million, extend the safe harbor for as long as applications are being processed, extend the 10-day notice of nonpayment, expand the Landlord Guarantee Fund, and take care of our Oregon families.

If we, as a state, expect to recover from a two year pandemic we must first begin at home. Our reintegration into society and contributions to our communities all depend on the stability of our homes. Help protect our families, our multigenerational homes, our single parent homes, our newly arrived Americans homes, our homes. Unite Oregon's 33,000 voices ask you to support Legislative Concept 9.