

- Good afternoon Co-chair Senator Lee Beyer, Co-chair Representative Julie Fahey and members of the committee.
- Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT). I am Kim McCarty the Executive Director of CAT. CAT is Oregon's only statewide, grassroots, tenant-controlled, tenant-rights organization. CAT supports the policies in LC9 because it can stop the completely preventable evictions due to application backlogs, retains current protections and adds needed funds to reduce the unpaid rent. No one should be evicted. There is no where for tenants to go.
- Every day, we talk to dozens of vulnerable renters across the state,
- Since the pandemic we have seen a increase in call volume to our Renters' Rights Hotline with more and more people worried about making rent after losing income from layoffs or illness. They are anxiously waiting for rent relief that is not coming through, and we also get calls from increasingly impatient and often volatile landlords, we hear it all.
- In the two weeks before OHCS announced they would be closing OERAP applications we received another increase in calls as people scrambled to submit applications in the hope they could stave off evictions. We are especially concerned about Black and Brown, Immigrant and Refugee households that were already experiencing disproportionate housing instability, and eviction harassment.
- Simply extending Safe Harbor protections for those already enrolled in OERAP leaves out thousands of eligible Oregonians in a time where deadly winter cold approaches, the pandemic continue to rage on with new variants, and SB 282 protections are soon to expire
- So While the bill today offers critical protections, that CAT supports, we feel a strong disappointment that the legislature and the governor have not stood up for longer term protection for renters, because whenever we have rent assistance available, we should never allow an eviction for nonpayment. Not today, not ever.

- We will continue to fight hard in the short session and beyond for systematically strong protections that will prevent us from having to piecemeal housing solutions in the future,
- These include the same solutions we shared with the Governor when we met with her last month:
- A moratorium on evictions, including no-cause evictions, for all Oregon tenants until June of 2023. We chose that date because by then the State is sure to have both secured and distributed any new federal emergency rental assistance and both landlords and tenants will have more certainty.

Additional solutions included:

- Reducing annual rent increases
- Securing more rent assistance
- Implementing penalties for violating tenant rights
- Rehousing tenants who have been evicted.
- Using low-barrier application methods like an attestation
- Resolving to create a permanent housing safety net system for Oregon.
- So, as you vote on this bill, please be aware that while it is necessary, it is only the bare minimum to be done for renters at this time. We were hopeful more might come out of this special session, but we are not finished advocating for the work that will still need to be done.

Thank you

Kim