

From the desk of Senator Kayse Tama, SD 24

Vote YES on HB 2009B to protect homeowners from foreclosure

As communities across our state continue to be significantly and negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic, we know that housing stability must be one of our primary concerns – keeping people safe at home, and preventing foreclosure. As many as one in five homeowners are worried about losing their home to foreclosure in the next two months.

We urge the passage of HB 2009B to protect Oregonians from foreclosure.

Our BIPOC communities have been particularly hard hit by COVID – both the impacts of job loss and the virus – due to systemic racism which has kept many in low wage jobs, and a legacy of environmental racism. The last foreclosure crisis also negatively and disproportionately impacted BIPOC communities. BIPOC households were more likely to lose their home and experience a greater loss of wealth than their white peers in the last foreclosure crisis.

Homeowners are reporting trouble accessing information from their lenders. In spite of federal protections – and assurances from banks that they are assisting homeowners – foreclosure counselors across Oregon are reporting that homeowners are struggling to communicate with their lender. Homeowners may be receiving conflicting information, or be offered no clear direction on steps to take to protect their home. Federal foreclosure protections provide protection for approximately 70% of homeowners who have federally backed mortgages. HB 2009B would extend protections to all Oregon homeowners, including small landlords with residential mortgages (four or fewer units per building) from foreclosure through June 30, 2021.

HB 2009B would provide homeowners immediate and meaningful protections.

The adopted -A12 amendments make several changes to address concerns from credit unions:

- The amendments clarify that lenders do not need to provide additional options beyond forbearance.
- Clarifies that lenders and trustees are eligible for safe harbor protections if the acted in accordance with the law prior to the passage of HB 2009.
- Replaces and clarifies language that a lender must include when notifying a borrower of the protections included in HB 2009, including the correction of an error.

Without a stable home, people will not be safe, nor will they be able to return to work and school. We must do all we can, as a state, to ensure we do not enter into another foreclosure crisis.

