

March 3, 2021
Subject: Yes on SB 282-1

Chair Jama, Co-Chair Linthicum, members of the Committee,

I am a single mom and I, like so many other moms and families, have gone through so much in the last year.

Until recently, my daughter and I were living with my mom after I left a 6-year abusive relationship. I had finally secured a place for me and my four-year-old daughter. Then, COVID happened and I had to stop working. I work as a hair stylist. I was lucky to have some savings but by October I had drained them all. I owe \$5,000 at this point. The last couple of months I've been receiving notices from my landlord, pressuring me to pay. But how can I? I don't even know when I'll be able to work again. I've already had to take out loans just to get by, to make sure my daughter and I have food on the table.

This isn't my fault. It's not anybody's fault. I didn't choose to not pay rent. The more debt that I accrue, the more I'm going to owe at once. I'm doing my best to get on my feet--I'm in school. I'm trying to find work. I live in a neighborhood full of families. They all have kids and they're all in the same situation as me. Renters, families, moms, we need more time to pay our rent back. We need to be protected from harassment from the landlord, like I'm already experiencing and is adding so much more stress.

Working moms, single parents, and working class renters are already the hardest hit by the pandemic. We're trying to figure out caring for our kids without any childcare or support. The job market hasn't recovered and isn't expected to fully do so until 2023. So many of us have fallen behind. We need time to access support, including federal rent assistance, to pay our rent back, and to stabilize our families. So many of us have already lost so much; it's unfathomable to imagine losing our homes too. I urge you to pass SB 282-1 and protect all of the Oregon families out there trying to get by in these unprecedented times.

Thank you.

Chevelle Barham
Tigard, OR