



March 3, 2021

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the committee,

We at Basic Rights Oregon are writing in support of SB 282-1 which will provide much-needed tenant COVID protections. We advocate for LGBTQ people throughout Oregon, and this bill is so vital for our community.

Passing SB 282-1 is important to avoid a wave of displacement and homelessness in our state that would have a devastating impact on families and individuals, particularly on our Black and Brown LGBTQ community members who are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from COVID evictions.

Discriminatory housing policies have made homeownership difficult and inaccessible, leaving people of color at greater risk of rental evictions even as higher rates of COVID exposure are leaving people ill and economically stressed. For example, according to the U.S. Census Pulse Survey, 30% of Black renters are at risk of eviction because of concerns they can't pay next month's rent.

Additionally, our transgender community members are at heightened risk of homelessness, as the National Center for Transgender Equality reports that 1 in 5 trans people have experienced homelessness at some point in their life.<sup>1</sup> And that figure is from before the pandemic. By taking up SB 282-1, we can ensure that our transgender loved ones and neighbors are safe.

The eviction moratorium was essential in helping renters stay safe and stable in their homes, but we need more time to help people pay thousands of dollars in back rent or to apply for rental assistance. At current rates, the state won't be fully vaccinated by rent due date of June 30th and our economy will likely

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Transgender Equality, <https://transequality.org/issues/housing-homelessness>

remain in partial shutdown. If renters can't go back to work, they can't pay their back rent.

As we move into the next stage of the COVID pandemic, we must acknowledge the ongoing difficulty that continues to face our most vulnerable communities, particularly Black and Brown LGBTQ people. We must act to ensure that the fallout from the COVID pandemic does not sentence Oregonians who rent their homes to lasting consequences. We urge you to pass SB 282-1.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.