

# Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Oregon Faith Movement

## Board Members

The Rev. J.W. Matt Hennessee  
*Co-chair*

The Rev. Linda Jaramillo  
*Co-chair*

The Rev. Michael Grogan  
*Chair-elect*

The Rev. Paul Belz-Templeman  
*Treasurer*

The Very Rev. Nathan LeRud  
*Secretary*

The Rev. Catherine Allard

The Rev. Vicky Brown

Shawn Daley

The Rev. Roberta Egli

The Rev. Ernestine Flemister

The Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes, Jr.

Charles Hudson

Alaide Ibarra

The Rev. Dr. Mark Knutson

The Rev. Sean Langdon

The Rev. Terry McCray Hill

The Rev. Nancy McGrath Green

Barbara O'Hare

Peter Sergienko

The Rev. Dr. William Sinkford

Jane Snyder

Pedro Sosa

Gary Withers

The Rev. Dr. Rodney Page

*Lifetime Member*

Jan Musgrove Elfers

*President*

Interchurch Center

245 S. Bancroft St., Ste. B

Portland, Oregon 97239

phone (503) 221-1054

fax (503) 223-7007

email [emo@emoregon.org](mailto:emo@emoregon.org)

website [EMOoregon.org](http://EMOoregon.org)

## Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 282: Tenant COVID-19 Recovery

4 March 2020

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

I am the Reverend Michael R. Grogan. I am an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and I am currently pastor of the Congregational Church of Lincoln City, United Church of Christ. Additionally, I serve as Chair-Elect of the Board for Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO). I am writing in strong support of SB 282.

Working with over 150 congregations, organizations, and interfaith partners, EMO strives to envision communities of faith in ministry together creating a more peaceful, just, sustainable, and compassionate world. EMO works to improve the lives of Oregonians through housing and other direct service programs, dialogue and advocacy.

EMO's support for ensuring protections to keep Oregonians in stable housing stems from both our commitment to justice as well as our experience operating four housing-related programs for marginalized communities. As a community of faith, we proclaim that our state has a moral imperative to keep our neighbors in housing through supportive services like those provided in SB 282. **The bill will stabilize renter households, and ensure that there is time for state and federal rent assistance to reach landlords and resolve back rent debt, preventing countless Oregonians from experiencing houselessness.**

**Now more than ever, we must also prevent houselessness to combat the injustice of systemic racism in Oregon's housing market.** Our Black and Brown neighbors are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from the COVID evictions. Discriminatory housing policies have made homeownership difficult and inaccessible, leaving people of color at higher risk of rental evictions even as higher rates of COVID exposure are leaving people ill and economically stressed. This issue crosses party and geographic lines. Republicans and Democrats alike, rural and urban alike, will face eviction through no fault of their own because of COVID lost income. And rural Oregon has the highest rates of student homelessness in the state

**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.** EMO believes in standing firmly alongside our neighbors who will struggle to pay back rent, including the up to 16% who are estimated to have fallen behind. **Our guiding social principles remind us that each human is affirmed in their dignity, with rights to safe and affordable housing.** With dim prospects for recovering lost income, renting Oregonians need more time to stabilize their families. We must ensure that people have time to access to assistance, and aren't unfairly evicted after the moratorium ends.

We call upon the legislature to take this important step in supporting Oregonians as we navigate COVID recovery.

Thank you for your work and consideration of this essential legislation.

Rev. Michael R. Grogan  
Lincoln City, Oregon