



3/4/2021

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

From: Oregon Health Equity Alliance

Re: Testimony in support of SB 282

Greetings Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the committee. We are writing to you on behalf of the Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA), one of six Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) across the state, in support of SB 282.

OHEA is one of six Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) across the state. We are based in Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties. We are a people-of-color led collaborative that organizes to center and uplift the wisdom of communities of color through racial justice-informed health equity policies and practices. This is a part of the movement to dismantle white supremacy and shift the imbalance of power in our state.

We are testifying in support of SB 282, as we believe that supporting renting Oregonians is an essential part of Oregon's COVID-19 recovery and advancing health equity. Working parents, BIPOC Oregonians, and blue-collar workers have borne and continue to bear the economic brunt of the pandemic because they are most likely to have lost income, are more likely to rent their homes, and/or are more likely to have contracted COVID. At the same time, [Oregonians are going to great lengths to pay their rent](#) - even during the moratorium - using savings, making sacrifices, borrowing money, all while juggling the hard realities of navigating family, community, and wellness during a global pandemic. By not extending the moratorium, we continue to negatively impact the ability of communities most impacted by the pandemic to thrive as best as they can while already in crisis. This, in turn, will exacerbate current health inequities that are rooted in diminishing our communities' humanities and deprioritizing community needs and wellness.

SB 282 will extend the grace period for re-payment of back rent, protect a tenants' future ability to rent again, and support our communities in sharing resources as they continue to navigate this crisis. These provisions are especially important for Black and Brown Oregonians who are at the greatest risk of lifelong harm from the COVID evictions. 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. Given the fundamental connection between housing, health, and wellness, we know that stabilizing renter households and providing additional protections for tenants will not only give more time for folks to get back on their feet but also serve a great deal in protecting their current and future health and wellness.

A temporary setback due to the pandemic shouldn't put the ability of our communities to attain and maintain their full health potential in question. We urge you to pass SB 282-1.

In health,

Ujuonu Nwizu

Community Engagement and Advocacy Strategist, Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)