



March 9, 2021

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

Re: Support for SB 282-1, Tenant COVID Protections

My name is Coua Xiong and I represent the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), who serve Asian and Pacific Islander communities throughout Oregon to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, cultural work, and community development. Thank you for taking up SB 282-1. APANO strongly supports this bill, which is essential for the health and well being of the people we serve.

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.

An estimated 11-16% of renters have fallen behind on rent. With dim prospects for recovering lost income, renting Oregonians need more time to stabilize their families. As nearly a half a billion dollars of state and federal tenant and landlord assistance are being distributed, we must ensure that people have time to access assistance, and aren't unfairly evicted after the moratorium ends. A temporary setback during COVID shouldn't make it impossible to rent in the future.

We need to ensure Oregon's recovery doesn't leave anyone out. Working mothers, BIPOC Oregonians and blue-collar workers have borne the economic brunt of the pandemic both because they are most likely to have lost income, are more likely to rent their homes or are more likely to have contracted COVID.

During COVID and after wildfires, many renters have had to double up - to care for kids who are now remote-learning, to care for elderly family members, or simply to share expenses because they cannot continue to pay rent. During this ongoing crisis, it's only fair to provide that landlords shouldn't kick people out who need to share housing during an emergency. Safe housing is critical at a time when the Asian community is also experiencing targeted racism and violence locally and nationally.

This provision is temporary, and only lasts through February - a reasonable provision while we get through this crisis.



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.

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. We must act to ensure that the fallout from the COVID pandemic does not sentence Oregonians who rent their homes to lasting collateral consequences. **We urge you to pass SB 282-1.**

Thank you,

Coua Xiong
Civic Engagement Manager, APANO