

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

For the record, my name is David DiMatteo, Associate Director of Family Life and Financial Stability Programs at Latino Network.

Like many service providers administering rent and energy assistance, we have been saddened and overwhelmed by the community need, and are daily faced with stories of heartbreaking loss, pain and suffering.

Families have struggled with this lethal pandemic, sickness, the death of family members, the partial shutdown of our economy, displacement due to wildfires and loss of income, and the constant threat of homelessness and financial ruin. Even as we witness the resistance of our families in the face of these challenges, as hardworking people struggle to make partial payments towards rent and bills, we have seen them fall further and further behind.

They have exhausted savings, taken gig work as they can find it, sold their possessions, borrowed money they will need to repay, and relied on the kindness and support of friends and family in the community, joining or merging households and caring for one another as they are able.

They need time to stabilize.

SB 282-1 provides the grace and protection these families need to stabilize as we work to vaccinate and reopen the world.

This process has been difficult for everyone, but particularly for Oregon's most vulnerable families, facing generational cycles of poverty and institutional racism.

As an agency working on housing issues, we enjoy good relationships with many landlords and property managers, who, like Eddie Passadore, have supported and stood by their tenants.

But many others have not acted with such empathy.

We receive daily accounts of threats, harassment, petty and punitive technical violations from landlords looking for a way to evict their tenants, using loopholes in the tenant protections we currently offer. And there are many loopholes.

No families should be threatened with eviction because a child playing in the courtyard jumped from a picnic table, or because a caregiver makes too many visits to an elderly tenant, or because they temporarily take in another family in need rather than let them go homeless. No landlord should threaten to call ICE on a family if they do not move out. But it's happening. These are only a few of the many examples I hear.

We need to prevent these needless, costly evictions, and the indelible harm they would visit on some of our most vulnerable community members.

SB 282-1 will close these loopholes, providing the necessary protections for families doubled up as a means of last resort to weather this storm, and allows the additional time needed for us to help stabilize the economy and the families who are most in need of our support.

We have an opportunity today to serve these families who have given so much to Oregon, through their work and sweat and tears.

They are an essential part of our economy, and our community. And now, it is essential that we show support for them, and pass SB 282-1.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

David DiMatteo