



April 26, 2021

RE: **Yes on SB 282A**, Tenant COVID Protections

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shannon Vilhauer and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. Thank you for taking up SB 282A. On behalf of our Board of Directors and the 24 local Habitat for Humanity affiliates we serve, I am writing to express our strong support this bill. Passage of SB 282A is essential for the health and well-being of our friends and neighbors—including the future homebuyers we serve.

This bill will stabilize renter households, ensuring that there is time for state and federal rent assistance to reach landlords and resolve back rent. Over the past year, many future homeowners in our pipeline have lost employment through no fault of their own. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate, negative impact on households who rely on service industry jobs, resulting in job loss for households in rural, suburban and urban Oregon communities alike.

An estimated 11-16% of renters have fallen behind on rent. Hardworking Oregonians from all corners of the state need more time to stabilize their families. As the state prepares to distribute nearly a half a billion dollars in state and federal, tenant and landlord assistance, please ensure that people have time to access these resources.

An eviction or a late payment can make it almost impossible for renters to access housing. Without action, the COVID pandemic will affect families for years to come. As we continue to face an enemy larger than ourselves, let's come together and help one another, so that the negative impacts don't last a lifetime. A temporary setback during this pandemic should not make it impossible for households to rent in the future.

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. Oregon renters who have faced COVID-era financial setbacks have shown resilience through one of the most difficult times our state has ever faced. Lawmakers have come together during the pandemic to keep people safe and in their homes. SB 282A will continue that work and we urge its swift passage.

Thank you for your dedication, service and sheer hard work.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shannon M. Vilhauer".

Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon

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