

To: Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos and Vice-Chair Morgan  
From: Kim McCarty  
Re: Support for HB 291  
Date: May 8, 2021

For the record my name is Kim McCarty. I am a member of the Oregon Racial Justice Committee. Based on my experience coordinating the Fair Housing Advocacy Committee for the City of Portland and in my role as the Executive Director of the Community Alliance of Tenants, I believe HB 291 provides important Fair Housing protections. Our Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Asian Pacific Islander, Immigrant, and refugee households are experiencing higher rates of harassment and discrimination and even more so since the COVID-19 public health emergency. These disparities in treatment are becoming disparities in eviction and homelessness on top of the disparities in rental application denials.

HB 291 requires landlords to adopt certain written screening criteria made available to applicants before accepting application. Limits criminal behavior landlord may consider in screening applicant. Requires landlord to conduct individualized assessment of applicant and specify any basis for denial.

At the Community Alliance of Tenants, I have seen how education of tenants and landlords regarding rights and responsibilities is protective of the interests of both tenants, landlords and the larger community. Too often tenants who are qualified, are screened out because they did not have the information to prepare for appeals to possible denials.

Federal guidance that says we cannot have screening criteria that screens out a whole class of people even if the criteria appears neutral. The standard is to conduct individualized assessments of applicants and to specify the basis of the denial so that the applicant can appeal. The disparities in policing of people based on race and skin color leads to disparities in rental application denials. Please support HB 291, it is aligned with federal guidance and aligned with screening policies being implemented by City of Portland.