

TO: House Committee on Housing
FROM: Leann Knapp, Oregon Food Bank
RE: **HB 2427 will help our communities Emerge Stronger**
DATE: February 11, 2021



Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

At Oregon Food Bank, we know that **hunger is a symptom of harmful policies and systems** that create barriers for people to thrive, and that we can only end hunger for good by tackling its root causes. That is why our mission is clear: we must act to address the inequality, racism and oppression that create serious disparities in all areas of life.

Housing, both its accessibility and cost, is one of the most common reasons cited for needing to access food assistance through the Oregon Food Bank. **The connections between housing and hunger are clear.** Oregonians who are renters are 10 times more likely than homeowners to experience hunger. In 2020, a staggering **53% of renters cut back on food and medications to pay rent.** And while the eviction moratorium passed by this body will protect renters from displacement due to their inability to pay rent for now, those protections won't last forever- and eviction is not the only reason individuals may need to find a new rental space.

As renters move to seek more opportunity, to be closer to family or support systems, to leave unhealthy environments, or simply to get a fresh start, the process of moving and **finding a new place to live is time consuming, expensive, and inaccessible for many.** The additional cost and burden of finding housing, covering the fees and costs associated with moving, and navigating confusing and often inconsistent systems, can all **contribute to the likelihood someone will have to skip meals or cut back on food.** A universal rental application could- and should- be another tool we utilize to make it easier for Oregonians to find a safe and stable place to live.

That is why **Oregon Food Bank urges support for HB 2427-** because every time we break down barriers and increase access to housing, we are fighting hunger in Oregon. We would like to thank you for your consideration and ongoing efforts to help Oregonians emerge stronger from this difficult time.

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