



TO: House Committee on Housing
FROM: Rental Housing Alliance Oregon
DATE: February 11, 2021
RE: Opposition to HB 2427

Thank you for accepting comments on HB 2427 from the Rental Housing Alliance Oregon (RHA). Since 1927 the RHA has set the standard for community participation by landlords providing affordable and quality housing. The Rental Housing Alliance Oregon has more than 1,900 members, 62% of whom own just 1-4 units and 81% of whom own 10 or fewer units.

In 2019 we were pleased to work with Senator Gelser on SB 484 which limited landlords to a single applicant screening charge per 60-day period, per applicant applying to rent multiple dwelling units owned or managed by landlord. This change allowed a prospective tenant to put in an application to a property management company with one application fee that applied to all the units in the property portfolio of that property manager or landlord. For some, that is multiple complexes and hundreds of units. This change made the application process more affordable for tenants.

HB 2427 does not mitigate costs in the process, it does not change affordability of a unit, and it does not increase access. What it does do is take away a landlord's ability to determine criteria specific to their unit. Following state and federal law, there are application criteria a landlord can utilize to find the best fit for a unit (i.e. Fair Housing guidelines). This ability to review an application is particularly important to match the affordability of a unit with the applicant's financial ability to maintain the tenancy and other key factors including accessibility to the premises and needs for reasonable accommodations. The application process can itself be a way for the landlord to share information about the property as much as it is for an applicant to provide information about themselves.

We can't help but wonder about the parallels that could be derived if this type of standardization is allowed to begin:

- Should all banks use the same account applications?
- Should all car dealers use the same loan application? Should ODOT insist their form, website and credit bureau choices be used?
- Should all credit card companies use the same forms and verification source?
- Should all colleges be required to use the common app and be restricted from asking additional questions?
- Should the Oregon Employment Department serve as the portal for all job applicants?

Finally, as with all business practices, there is a cost to developing, accepting and verifying applications even outside of the third-party screening process. Currently, the landlord bears that burden. With HB 2427 the resource burden becomes that of DHCS and we do not see in the bill how they will be funded for the work. Will we ask taxpayers to shoulder the cost via the general fund?

Respectively,

Ron Garcia, President
Rental Housing Alliance Oregon