



January 30, 2023

Senator Kayse Jama
Chair, Senate Housing and Development Committee
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

We strongly urge you to pass SB 799 as quickly as possible as part of the Homelessness Prevention Package that includes \$100 million in rent new rent assistance, SB 611 / HB 2733 to limit the exorbitant and abusive rent increases too many landlords are imposing this year, and the Rental Market Data Bill for greater transparency into this essential component of Oregon's housing availability.

My name is Timothy Morris and I serve as the executive director of the Springfield Eugene Tenant Association. SETA is a non-profit, public service organization that is dedicated to renters' rights and interests. We provide a free hotline as a community support and we are often times a renter's first call when they receive an eviction notice. The demand for our services has skyrocketed from 2020 to present, where we presently resolve over 250 cases a month.

Reducing evictions is an essential part of our housing and homelessness response. As Gov. Kotek and legislative leadership commit to increasing the housing supply and rehousing our homeless neighbors, we must also ensure that the people who are housed today don't end up on the streets themselves.

While there are no national or local statistics of how many evicted people experience homelessness, surveys in several communities say that between 12-37% of people who have been evicted became homeless at some point, or say eviction was a cause of homelessness. Even at the most conservative estimate, if 12% of the 2,000 eviction cases this month alone experienced homelessness, that increases our current crisis by 240 households statewide.

People are living on the edge financially. [According to the state economist, more than 50% of Oregon renters do not have enough money left over](#) for food, medicine, basic necessities. When people on the edge get evicted, it is all too easy to fall into homelessness.



Meanwhile, according to tax returns, even during the Pandemic, the number of Oregonians earning more than \$500,000 jumped increased more than 11% in 2020 and nearly tripled over the past decade. COVID-19 caused unemployment that peaked at 14% and left renters without work for long periods of time.

On average, landlords filed evictions against Black women renters at double the rate of or higher than their white renters in Oregon and in 16 other states, according to the ACLU's Women's Rights Project and Data Analytics team.

Communities already facing historical and systemic barriers to jobs, housing, health care, opportunity and wealth are paying an unfair price for Oregon's unfair and rushed eviction laws.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 799 as quickly as possible. If you'd like to connect with me, please reach out to tmorris@springfieldeugenetenantassociation.com or call me at 541-357-7331. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Timothy Morris
Executive Director
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association.