

**Testimony Submitted by  
Chris Coughlin, Policy Director  
Oregon Consumer Justice  
To the Senate Committee on Housing and Development**

January 29, 2023

Regarding: Support for SB 799

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

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of Oregon Consumer Justice today in support of SB 799 to update Oregon's eviction process to be more equitable.

Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ) advances a justice movement to ensure Oregonians have the freedom to thrive and equitably share in our abundance of resources. For too long, flawed systems and economic policies that favor profits over people have stood in the way of this reality, with communities of color most often experiencing the greatest harm. Strengthened through responsive and reciprocal community relationships, OCJ organizes, advocates, and litigates to put people first. We envision an inclusive future where financial and business transactions can be relied upon as safe and where all Oregonians know and have recourse to exercise their consumer rights.

We believe all Oregonians should have a safe place to call home and should be able to afford their rent and have enough to pay for other basic needs, including food, health care, transportation, and childcare. However, with rising rents and other rising expenses, families sometimes get behind on their rent.

**Renters are consumers within the housing marketplace.** The eviction process needs safeguards to ensure that the process is fair and that, as consumers in the

marketplace, tenants have the information they need and adequate time to navigate the system to avoid eviction whenever possible. **We have the opportunity to make the eviction system more fair and equitable.**

SB 799 is a fair approach that gives people behind on their rent a reasonable amount of time to catch up and, if they need it, locate, apply and receive rent assistance before they are thrust into the eviction court system.

SB 799 contains several important elements that provide a more fair eviction process. For example, SB 700 would reinstate provisions enacted during the pandemic, including:

- Increased time between nonpayment notice and eviction court from 72 hours to 10 days to give people time to access assistance.
- The "right to redemption," also known as "pay to stay," so that landlords cannot refuse payment at any point before a final court judgment.
- Providing information about how to access legal assistance.

Evictions for non-payment are skyrocketing. From October 2022, when pandemic protections expired, through December 2022, there have been an average of 2,155 court evictions a month, every month. Before the pandemic, the average monthly rate was approximately 1,500 a month. This is a spike of 43%. More than 80% of current eviction filings are because rent was late.

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

We urge your support of SB 799 to help move our eviction process to one that is more fair and equitable.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to Oregon's communities.