



January 30, 2023

To: Senate Housing and Development Committee
From: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda
RE: Support of SB 799, Protect Families from Eviction

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

Our Children Oregon (OCO) is a statewide organization that advances equitable policies, data and research, and whole-child advocacy. The Children's Agenda, convened by OCO, brings together ~127 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the well-being of Oregon's children, youth, and families. Our collective created a 2023 legislative agenda that focuses on community-driven solutions to provide access and opportunities for all children and families.

A safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need. Every Oregonian should have access to a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. However, over 18,000 Oregon renters have had evictions filed against them in 2022.¹ Eviction, displacement, and homelessness cause major disruptions for tenants, particularly for young children and youths which affect their schooling and educational outcomes. The prevalence of homelessness is higher among youths who experienced foster care, LGBTQ+ youths, and youths of color, especially Black, Latinx, and Indigenous youths.²

Oregon already has one of the highest student homelessness rates in the country. Over 21,000 Oregon students experienced homelessness during the 2019-2020 school year.³ These students' circumstances put them at an incredible disadvantage through no fault of their own. They are unable to adequately study, adequately learn, and wholly engage in their education. They are 27% less likely to graduate from high school than housed students. We also know that eviction rates show deep racial disparities in Oregon. On average, landlords filed evictions against Black women renters at double the rate or higher than white renters in Oregon.⁴ Looking across the state, spikes in evictions have happened in areas with Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities.⁵

¹ <https://www.evictedinoregon.com/numbers-at-a-glance>

² https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/homeless_students/state/OR

³ <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

⁴ <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/clearing-the-record-how-eviction-sealing-laws-can-advance-housing-access-for-women-of-color>

⁵ <https://www.opb.org/article/2022/12/02/new-psu-website-shows-eviction-data-in-oregon/>

Stable homes are essential for the development, growth, and health of children and youth. **The risk of eviction and housing instability can cause lifelong and multigenerational consequences.**⁶ SB 799 would specifically incorporate lessons learned during the COVID pandemic and reform our eviction laws to ensure people have access to resources that could prevent eviction and displacement.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 799 as quickly as possible as part of the State Homelessness Prevention Package, which includes:

- \$100 million in rent new rent assistance
- SB 611 and HB 2733 to limit the exorbitant and abusive rent increases
- Rental Market Data Bill for greater transparency into this essential component of Oregon's housing availability.

Reducing evictions is an essential part of our housing and homelessness response. We appreciate the efforts and commitment of Oregon leaders to increase the housing supply and rehousing our homeless neighbors, but we must also ensure that the people who are housed today don't end up on the streets themselves.

We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge your support of SB 799 to prevent eviction and displacement, ensuring stable homes for Oregon's children and families.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Ivy Major-McDowall, Policy and Advocacy Director

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

View the 2023 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7922232/>