

Submitter: Martha Ruttle

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB799

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Martha Ruttle, I live in Southeast Portland, and I am both a landlord and a longtime educator. Together, my husband and I have five residential units in the city of Portland. And I am here to testify in favor of SB 799.

My role as a landlord is one I take seriously: I approach it with a commitment to fairness and integrity. I bring this same commitment to my work as an educator, and it is my experience as an educator of young children that motivated me to speak to you this morning. Last week I spent time in a first grade classroom. To refresh your memory, most children in first grade are six or seven years old. While I was helping the children with math, one child, who I had met just that week, shared with me that she was feeling sad. She said she was sad because she missed her family's dogs: she explained that her family had to give up the dogs because they could no longer afford to care for them. She said that happened just before she and her family had to leave their home because they could no longer pay for it. She told me she really missed her dogs and her home.

Most, if not all, of the Oregon educators I know can tell you similar stories. We know that housing instability hurts people, because we see how it hurts the children we care for. Losing a home is detrimental to children's mental health and makes it more difficult for them to learn each day. Safe, stable housing is critical for children's wellbeing. As an educator and mother — and as a landlord — I encourage you to vote yes on SB 799 and the Homelessness Prevention Package.

Thank you for your time.