

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, please accept this testimony in strong support of HB 2001, which is an important element of the response to our housing crisis. The bill ensures a focus on youth homelessness prevention, provides innovative approaches to addressing housing supply barriers, and contains critical measures to help prevent eviction-caused homelessness. We appreciate that this bill is bipartisan and bicameral and the work that has been done to get it to this point.

We are writing to urge support of Sections 14-26 of HB 2001, which contain essential and reasonable negotiated improvements to Oregon's eviction statutes to promote stability and payment rather than displacement and eviction. These Sections of the bill:

- Expand the time after a notice of nonpayment before being taken to court from 72 hours to 10 days.
- Provide that nonpayment eviction notices and court forms should include information about where to find rent assistance and legal assistance and provide access to translation of these forms.
- Amend first appearance and trial timelines to ensure that tenants have a greater chance of finding help before their hearing.
- Provide that an eviction case will be dismissed if payment is made before final judgment.
- Make the default judgment process more fair.
- Streamline the eviction sealing process for those who qualify for sealing, removing a procedural barrier to future housing stability.

Eviction, displacement and homelessness are particularly difficult for young people and students. Oregon already has one of the highest student homelessness rates in the country. **23,765 Oregon students experienced homelessness at some point in 2022.** 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. At United Way of the Columbia-Willamette we work to provide opportunities, services and support to ensure young children and families are stable, healthy and prepared for educational and life success, which is why we urge you to pass HB 2001 for the sake of these students, their futures, and ultimately the future of Oregon.

In closing, passage of HB 2001 will enhance our capacity to respond to youth homelessness, create innovative approaches to addressing housing supply barriers, and provide reasonable and critical measures to help prevent eviction-caused homelessness. The bill reflects the urgency of the crisis too many Oregonians are living with due to lack of housing, inadequate services, and eviction statutes designed for displacement instead of stability.

Thank you to the legislature and to Gov. Kotek for your fast action on this package to help our communities respond to the crisis of homelessness and to improve stability and safety for individuals and families across the state.

Sincerely,

Nicole LaRose
Milwaukie, Oregon