

Submitter: Jon Stephenson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3237

Dear Chair Dexter and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for HB 3237, which would allow cities and counties to set their own cap on application fees for new apartments. As you may know, rental application fees have become a common practice in the Oregon rental market, ranging from \$20 to over \$75 per adult. However, this practice can lead to consumer rights abuses and create barriers for renters with criminal history, past evictions, or other admission barriers. It disproportionately impacts Black female-headed households and contributes to residential segregation.

The bill will help to reduce discrimination and segregation in the housing market, reduce barriers to housing for all renters, and protect consumer rights. As such, I believe that supporting this bill is essential for ensuring fair access to housing for all Oregonians.

I urge you to support HB 3237 for the following reasons:

Vermont and Massachusetts have already enacted a straight prohibition of rental application fees, which has been effective in improving access to housing, consumer protection, and reducing discrimination and segregation.

Allowing local jurisdictions to cap rental application fees eliminates most of the problems caused by these fees and improves access to housing, protects consumer rights, and reduces discrimination and segregation in the housing market.

Landlords benefit the most from screening reports, and refusing to use portable screening reports shifts significant costs to applicants, which can be considered anti-competitive behavior and suppresses the market for a universal portable screening report. This bill allows for a universal portable screening report.

Application fees can create significant barriers for renters with criminal history, past evictions, or other admission barriers. Such fees can also drive renters towards lower quality housing and contribute to residential segregation.

More than 2,000 Application Screening vendors exist in the United States alone, with prices and subscription models that vary. Some offer a fee per tenant model, some offer a monthly subscription model.

In conclusion, by supporting HB 3237, you will be taking an important step towards

reducing discrimination and segregation in the housing market, protecting consumer rights, and reducing barriers to housing for all renters.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jon Daniel Stephenson