



March 14, 2023

Representative Maxine Dexter
Chair, House Housing and Homelessness Committee
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

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

My name is Timothy Morris and I serve as the Executive Director of the Springfield Eugene Tenant Association. SETA is a non-profit, public service organization that is dedicated to renters' rights and interests. We provide a free hotline as community support and we are often times a renter's first call when they are in need of support. The demand for our services has skyrocketed from 2020 to present, where we presently resolving over 230 cases a month.

Transparency in the rental market is sorely needed, which is why SETA is in support of HB 2680. Prospective tenants who are looking for a home often need to submit several applications for rental units in the hope of being approved for a home. Unregulated application fees have been a significant barrier to tenants across the state of Oregon, with some fees as high as \$75 per application per adult. Applicants can spend upwards of \$300-\$500 on application fees alone, just to be told no at the front door.

Tenants are living on the edge financially. [According to the state economist, more than 50% of Oregon renters do not have enough money left over](#) for food, medicine, basic necessities. When people are in between housing, especially those who have been unfairly evicted, it is all too easy to fall into homelessness.

The current application process is, at best, ambiguous. Prospective tenants frequently pay the application fee without ever hearing about the status of their application or if their background check was screened. We connect with many tenants who are unaware of their rights to even have their screening fee returned if the application was never processed. Some tenants are unaware of these rules because of how infrequently they receive their fees back. This bill identifies narrow changes to applicant screening law to help renters and landlords navigate requirements for accepting application fees and returning them when the application isn't processed.

SETA supports adding transparency and structure to the rental application process for tenants and landlords **We strongly urge you to pass HB 2680.** If you'd like to connect with me, please



reach out to tmorris@springfeldeugenetenantassociation.com or call me at 541-357-7331. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Timothy Morris
Executive Director
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association.