



February 14, 2023

To: House Housing and Homelessness Committee
From: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda
RE: Support of HB 2001

Dear Chair Dexter, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Helfrich, 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 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 HB 2001 is an important step in 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.

In particular, we would like to express support for sections 14 – 26 in the bill, which contains essential improvements to Oregon’s eviction statutes:

- 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 fairer.
- Streamline the eviction sealing process for those who qualify for sealing, removing a procedural barrier to future housing stability.

We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge your support of HB 2001 to ensure 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/>