

Submitter: Cole Franko
On Behalf Of: Rent Assistance Funding
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB1530

February 14, 2024

Support for Rent Assistance Investments to Prevent Homelessness

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Housing and Development Committee:

It's time to ensure adequate investment in rental assistance and eviction prevention, to prevent homelessness in Oregonian. Oregon is among the states with the most cost-burdened renters in the nation. As a result, Oregon has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation.

With a sharp spike in high-rent homelessness, it's urgent that you invest in proven prevention strategies that keep Oregonians housed. At current levels of need, the funds previously allocated will be gone by July 2024. The legislature must fully fund the Stable Homes for Oregon package included in Fair Shot's People's Budget which has had a proven track record of keeping working Oregonians safe and stable.

Altogether, this package calls for:

\$45 million in rent assistance through community action agencies and community-based organizations.

\$6.5 million to the Urban League of Oregon for culturally specific housing stability services.

\$6 million to the Home Fund at Oregon Worker Relief for housing stability services for immigrant Oregonians.

\$2 million for outreach services for residents of expiring affordable housing units.

86% of eviction filings are for nonpayment, against people who have fallen behind on their rent. There are close to 2000 eviction filings a month. The availability of rent assistance for tenants in the critical time of need will help ensure that landlords get paid, evictions are avoided, and most importantly, Oregonians stay housed.

Hardworking Oregonians are struggling to make ends meet, facing eviction and homelessness as a result. It is ten times less expensive to prevent homelessness than it is to respond to it. The People's Budget investments will keep people housed, while we work towards long-term solutions to end our housing and affordability crisis.

I want to make it clear here: WITHOUT RENT ASSISTANCE OR RENT CONTROL, THE HOUSELESS POPULATION WILL CONTINUE TO GROW. IF PEOPLE CAN'T AFFORD HOUSING, NO AMOUNT OF SWEEPS WILL END HOUSELESSNESS.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Cole Franko