

February 9th, 2024

Support for Rent Assistance Investments to Prevent Homelessness

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

I am here as a working-class citizen who has had to use rental assistance. I've worked primarily in the Environmental and Geospatial sector, and as we know, the environment changes at any moment. I was out of work for more than a week suddenly because of the major freeze in Portland a few years ago and needed to pay \$1050 in rent. The rental assistance I gained, as a single individual, helped me from accruing a late payment charge from my landlord and covered an entire month of rent!

Rental assistance kept me housed.

It's time to ensure adequate investment in rental assistance and eviction prevention, to prevent homelessness in Oregon. 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. The legislature must fully fund the Stable Homes for Oregon package included in Fair Shot's People's Budget.

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.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Brod Salo