



April 15, 2025

Re: ON BEHALF OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION POPs 504 and 505

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee:

I am Alex Rhodes, the current CAT Board President, writing on behalf of the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) Board, in strong support of Policy Option Packages 504 and 505, the Homelessness Prevention Package in the Oregon Housing and Community Services Agency Budget. These POPs will allocate \$173.2 million to ensure the continuity of emergency rent assistance and community-based and culturally specific services designed to prioritize the prevention of eviction and homelessness in communities across the state.

The CAT Board serves all Oregonians that rent their homes. Many tenants are just one paycheck or emergency away from not being able to pay rent. We believe that we all need to help Oregonians should be able to get through these unexpected hardships without the additional hardship of losing a home and stability. At CAT, we have seen first-hand how the emergency rent assistance we administered, coupled with education, advocacy, and referral, has proven to be a cost-effective tool for stabilizing households and preventing the negative outcomes of evictions and homelessness. This year the state has made many long-range efforts to add housing but fewer efforts to resolve the eviction crisis. A pool of emergency rent assistance is the least we can do.

Oregon renters are the 5th [most cost burdened](#) in the nation, and our eviction crisis is growing with more than 27,000 cases filed last year. Approximately 88% of evictions are because tenants cannot afford Oregon's high rents. As housing costs rise, more families are being pushed into crisis. Oregon families are on the brink, and we must act now with real solutions.

From the tenants that call us we know that the threat of homelessness is greatest for our most vulnerable neighbors: families with children, domestic violence survivors, and seniors. Elderly Oregonians are now the fastest-growing group losing their homes, and Oregon has the highest rate of youth homelessness in the nation. Eviction, displacement and homelessness have lifelong implications for health, education, and economic opportunities.

Solving our homelessness crisis is deeply challenging, but it is not impossible. There are evidence-based prevention solutions already in place to keep thousands of families, seniors, and hard-working Oregonians out of homelessness. Connecting people to eviction protection and homelessness prevention services such as navigation services and legal assistance is a proven approach to ensure people can stay housed. When we can prevent evictions, we can turn off the pipeline into homelessness.



Preventing eviction is 5–10 times cheaper than letting someone fall into homelessness and trying to rehouse them later. Beyond cost, prevention also avoids trauma, job loss, school disruption, and health risks that come with homelessness.

We urge you to prioritize the critical and proven safety net continued by POPS 504 and 505. Please invest \$173.2 million to continue homelessness prevention and eviction intervention services and legal assistance, which are making a difference for thousands of Oregonians and stemming the tide of homelessness in our communities.

Our lawmakers must act now to protect our communities, support our providers, and ensure every Oregonian has a stable framework to build their future.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities. |

Sincerely,

Alex Rhodes

Alex Rhodes, CAT Board President

Community Alliance of Tenants Board Members
Alex Rhodes
David Carlson
Norma Jean Scott
Shelley Beaulieu
Delfina Andrade