



To: Chair Marsh and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
Re: SUPPORT SB 1523 - Bridging the Digital Divide for Tenants
Date: 2/19/2026

Latino Network was founded in 1996 by advocates for the needs of the growing Latinx community in Multnomah County. Since then, these grassroots beginnings have evolved into a continuum of services that support Latinx individuals, families, and communities. Our programs currently focus on education, advocacy & leadership, health & wellness, economic justice, youth empowerment & violence prevention, and arts & culture, engaging nearly 11,000 community members throughout Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in the last year. We are the leading culturally-specific provider for Latinx youth, parent, and family services in the Portland area with the goal of serving the nearly 19% of Oregon's population who identify as Latinx or Hispanic.

Latino Network currently provides direct services to youth and families in Senate Districts 13-15 and 19-25 and House Districts 25, 26, 28, 29, 37, 40 and 42-50.

The digital divide isn't just about internet access—it's about making sure that people aren't required to purchase a smartphone or other personal computer device simply to meet their fundamental needs, including housing. We have a responsibility to make sure that technology is not used to lock people out of basic services.

SB 1523 codifies three requirements to ensure basic needs that are unfortunately expensive commodities in our community are put even further out of reach:

- Keep the option to pay by check or other commercially reasonable method
- Keep the option of a paper application
- Keep the option of a non-digital key to access essential facilities

Latino Network provides re-housing support for many community members who have recently experienced homelessness and incarceration. Many people who experience incarceration are already denied housing based on their record, some have court order limitations to accessing technology, these compounding factors perpetuate homelessness despite efforts to end homelessness in our communities. Often we are helping people obtain their first personal computer or smartphone like device, it takes time for people to learn these systems. Locking housing behind these literal firewalls is unnecessary and contributes to housing instability.

Please support SB 1523