



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

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Oregon Senate Passes Bill to Keep Oregonians Housed

SALEM – Today, the Oregon Senate re-passed Senate Bill 278, a bill to support renters and to prevent an eviction crisis. Throughout 2020 and 2021, Oregon Senate Democrats have supported renters who are unable to pay their rent due to circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 public health crisis.

“While some feel as though life is getting back to normal, others are still struggling due to this wholly unequal recession. Lower income and vulnerable Oregonians are taking much longer to recover,” said Senator Kayse Jama (D-East Portland). “The Legislature has worked incredibly hard to keep Oregonians housed throughout this crisis. It would be wrong to let a lapse in timelines cause Oregonians to face eviction or insurmountable debt.”

During the Third Special Session of 2020, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 4401 to protect renters across the state by creating a qualified extension of the eviction moratorium established by Governor Brown via executive order earlier that year. The bill also created the Oregon Landlord Compensation Fund to support landlords while keeping Oregonians housed. That fund allowed for landlords to receive 80% of rent that has not been collected due to tenant hardship. That qualified eviction moratorium is set to expire on June 30, 2020.

Additionally, the first wave of federal emergency rental assistance was passed by Congress in December 2020. Following passage, the latest guidance on distribution of those funds was delayed until May 2021. Due to this, applicants have had limited time to access funds before the eviction moratorium closes.

This session, Senate Bill 282 was signed into law, which extended the grace period for repayment of rent accrued during the eviction moratorium until February 28, 2022. Senate Bill 278 furthers those protections by ensuring a tenant cannot be evicted within 60 days of filing for rental assistance. Additionally, the Landlord Compensation Fund will retroactively and prospectively reimburse successful applicants at an increased rate of 100% of unpaid rent accrued due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Disparities that already existed were deepened by the pandemic, with Senate Bill 278 we have an opportunity to prevent further exacerbation of those disparities and increase opportunities for health and future success for Oregonians struggling to get by,” added Senator Jama. “When we end this session and spend more time with our communities, every legislator wants to see those communities benefiting from the work of the Legislature. Senate Bill 278 will do just that.”

Senate Bill 278 concurred the House amendments on a vote of 27-2 and now goes to the Governor for her signature.

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