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***In Support of Protections for Tenants: HB 4143***

Dear Chair Rosenbaum, Vice-Chair Boquist, and members of the committee,

On behalf of OCADSV (the Coalition), I submit this testimony in support of HB 4143 and improved protections for tenants within the landlord-tenant act. The Coalition is comprised of 48 nonprofit and tribal community based organizations that provide prevention and crisis/intervention services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Our advocates and the survivors we serve are clear: access to safe and stable housing is one of the main barriers to the safety and well-being of survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Oregon.

One of the most important issues in the lives of survivors is the challenge to maintain safe, stable, and affordable housing. Without stable housing, it is difficult or impossible for survivors to hold down a job, keep children in school, access neighborhood amenities, and stay healthy and safe. The housing crisis has a particularly serious impact on victims of domestic and sexual violence and their children. Survivors trying to establish safety after leaving a violent relationship are economically vulnerable, and are often newly supporting themselves and their families without a second income.

In a growing number of communities across the state, low vacancy rates leave renters at risk of displacement if subject to sudden and unplanned rent increases. In all too many instances, survivors facing a sudden rent increase face the terrible choice between homelessness and returning to unsafe homes, risking further violence for themselves and their children regardless of their choice.

Safe shelter and housing create opportunity, and are keys to breaking the cycle of poverty and violence. Please support the reasonable protections proposed for tenants in HB 4143, to help protect stability for renters in the midst of this statewide housing crisis.

Thank you for your service, and for the opportunity to submit testimony on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Timmons  
Executive Director  
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence  
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