



May 8, 2023

Senate Committee on Commerce and labor

Senator Pat Spearman and committee members:

My name is Laura Tooker and I am a member of Green Valley United Methodist Church which is a member of Nevadans for the Common Good. Nevadans for the Common Good, a broad-based organization of 30+ dues-paying congregations and non-profits throughout Southern Nevada representing over 100,000 people, supports AB298.

Through our member institutions we have talked to thousands of Southern Nevada residents, walked through dozens of neighborhoods, and met with many community leaders. We have heard about the high costs and increasing barriers to obtaining affordable and fair lease agreements from across a diversity of residents.

A consistent thread in the stories we have heard is the unprecedented rise in application fees for a house or apartment rental and a lack of understanding, in general, regarding other fees included in a lease agreement. The upfront expense of high application fees is an ongoing and costly burden for all families including working professionals, foster parents, seniors, and students that limits our community in finding permanent and stable housing.

We heard a story from a clergy member that has been forced to pay hundreds of dollars for each application for a rental unit with each application fee including costs for each family member including his minor children. Currently, the application fees are not refunded when the potential tenant doesn't get the rental for which he applied quickly depleting money needed for a deposit or paying rent once a unit is obtained. This limits a person's ability to apply for other housing when an application isn't accepted. AB298 addresses this concern by providing for a refund of application fees when the prospective tenant does not obtain a lease agreement and exempting minors from payment of this fee.

Application fees should not be seen as a revenue source for our landlords or property managers. They should merely be a mechanism to cover the direct and actual costs of background checks.

AB298 provides additional tenant protection by requiring appendices to a lease that contain clear and concise explanations of each fee that the tenant may be charged and the tenant's rights per federal and state laws as well as local ordinances.

Nevadans for the Common Good encourages you to support this bill which reduces barriers and adds key protections for tenants who make up nearly 50% of our community.

NEVADANS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

PLEASE SEND CORRESPONDENCE VIA MAIL TO:

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