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## HB 315 – Human Relations – Discrimination in Housing – Income Based Housing Subsidies

Position: Favorable

Hearing date: February 5, 2026

Committee: Economic Matters Committee

My name is Katrina Emmerson Kugel, the Government Relations Manager at SEEC. On behalf of our organization, a community provider of services to over 300 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), I encourage a favorable report on HB 315.

Under the 1999 *Olmstead* Supreme Court decision, people with disabilities have the right to live in the most integrated, community-based setting possible and not be forced into institutions. The right of people with disabilities to choose where they live can only be achieved when they are able to use their housing vouchers without economic discrimination by landlords. By not allowing landlords to use credit history and financial information before they received their voucher, it will lessen this practice.

People with disabilities are disproportionately low-income and therefore rely heavily on Housing Vouchers and other income-based subsidies. At the same time, barriers to building credit can undermine their ability to use these vouchers successfully, limiting their choice in housing options.

Sizhe, someone we support, was recently asked what he likes about living on his own and he said money management and getting the services he needs like maintenance. As he stated, *“I moved out of my parents house September of last year. I have two roommates and I live at Main Street, affordable housing for people with disabilities (25%) and neurotypical people (75%). My apartment is the beginning of my adult journey and becoming independent.”*

The ability to choose housing in one’s community means dignity, choice, and authority for all people, including those with I/DD.

Extra income or credit checks by landlords are not necessary because Public Housing Authorities already check income, set rents based on what a household can afford, and change assistance when income changes.

In addition, credit scores were not created to decide who should get housing, and they usually do not include rent payment history. Research and guidance from HUD show that using credit scores for people with housing assistance can unfairly harm people with disabilities, Black renters, women-led households, and very low-income families.

HB 315 makes clear what screening practices are appropriate. It still allows landlords to screen tenants, but ensures the rules are fair and focused on what matters. The bill helps reduce unnecessary denials and barriers so people with disabilities can find housing in their communities. We believe this legislation will support long-term housing stability across the state.

We encourage a favorable report for HB 315. Thank you.