



**HOUSING
ALLIANCE**

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Tenant Protections and Inclusionary Zoning Strengthen Housing Opportunity

**House Committee on Human Services and Housing
February 1, 2016
House Bill 4001 Relating to Housing**

Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the Committee,

The Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than seventy organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the base on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices from residents to local jurisdictions to non-profit housing developers and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We ask your support for tenant protections and inclusionary zoning. We need to enact a stronger set of protections for the many thousands of tenants in Oregon who rent on a month-to-month basis when landlords do not offer fixed term leases. We also need to allow communities to find local solutions to meet their housing needs through inclusionary zoning.

Tenants face unprecedented challenges in maintaining housing stability. Dramatic increases in rent and a spate of no-cause evictions are impacting renters all over Oregon. Record-low vacancy rates in communities throughout the state mean that renters have few options in the face of rent increases and evictions. The Housing Alliance has also submitted testimony which captures the scope of housing needs of communities throughout the state.

Good tenants should be protected from sudden evictions for no reason by providing them with at least 90 days' notice for a no-cause eviction. Finding a new unit in communities throughout Oregon can be nearly impossible. Increased notice will help reduce the potentially devastating consequences associated with eviction, including severe financial instability, educational and job disruption, and even homelessness. Given the serious shortage of affordable rentals, tenants being evicted for no reason



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should also receive one month's credit to help them find and move in to a new unit, reducing the risk of these tenants becoming homeless.

Tenants should also have longer time to prepare for rent increases, with at least a 90 days' notice required. Currently, rents can be increased by any amount with just 30 days' notice, leaving tenants with little time to find a new unit or adjust their budget. The same notice period for rent increases has been the law for nearly three decades for manufactured home parks. New tenants should also be protected from rent increases during the first year of tenancy. These provisions would help renters stay in their homes and give them more time to find new ones, should they no longer be able to afford the new rent.

Tenant protections should also include stronger protection from retaliation. While retaliation is prohibited under current law, it is nearly impossible for a tenant to prove that an eviction was the result of a request for maintenance or a complaint for a code violation. Tenants are afraid to ask for the maintenance needed to keep their home safe and habitable because of the risk of a retaliatory eviction. By restoring the rebuttable presumption of retaliation for evictions within six months of a valid repair request, tenants will be able to stay in their homes and in safer, healthier conditions.

Oregon also needs more options to build diverse, thriving communities for families at all income levels. Inclusionary zoning is a tool in the toolbox for local communities to produce affordable housing units and should be available to Oregon. The communities in our state have limited resources and tools to address our growing affordable housing needs. The blanket ban has created a significant chilling effect on development efforts across communities aimed at creation of "inclusive" housing opportunities, especially in smaller jurisdictions with limited resources.

Inclusionary zoning policies have the potential to give families and individuals more choice about where they live, which schools their children attend, and how to commute to work. Such policies have been shown to help people with modest incomes remain close to family, friends, and services. Inclusionary zoning requires developers to set aside a percentage of units for rental or sale to low and moderate income families during the design and conception stage of projects. Inclusionary zoning policies therefore have the ability to harness the energy of the private market to help create



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affordable homes, and enable economic integration and social inclusion without unduly burdening private parties.

On behalf of the Housing Alliance, I urge your prompt consideration and support of these proposals, which promises to benefit all Oregon communities. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Lee', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Jenny Lee

On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance



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Housing Alliance Members

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A Home for Everyone Multnomah County
Alliance of Family & Housing Success
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
Bienestar
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CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
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City of Portland
Clackamas County
Coalition of Communities of Color
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Common Ground
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Energy Project
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Cornerstone Community Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corporation
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Hacienda CDC
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Lane County Legal Aid and Advocacy Center
League of Women Voters of Oregon
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Metro
Momentum Alliance
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Open Door Counseling Center
Oregon AFSCME Local 3135
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
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Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc.
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Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition
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