

Violet Wilson
6546 Hogan Dr N., Keizer, OR

I am opposed to HB 2004.

Both tenants and landlords agree that this state needs affordable housing and support for low income families. But having laws that place landlords in a box, limits and hinders our ability to support low income families and does not address the real issue.

Landlords have been described in a one size fits all category. But, like tenants, we all have our stories. As a child I lived on welfare and in subsidized housing. I know what it is like to be poor and the difficulties in dealing with housing. I personally know what it was like to live in a house with falling plaster, buckets and pans laid out inside the house to catch the rainwater, and bundling up in blankets because the furnace did not work.

With a good education, I now earn a decent living. My husband and I have single family homes that we rent out and we have a small property management firm. Most of my owners own one or two rentals and, in most cases, is it part of their retirement savings. They are not wealthy and many of them need these funds to supplement their income. Many are likely to sell out rather than run the risk of a costly eviction.

I have tried to be reasonable in raising rents. I have taken risks on tenants with marginal backgrounds. But the difficult hurdles introduced by this bill would make that risk taking impossible. This would make it more difficult for some tenants to find housing.

Small, cheaper dwellings are in the highest demand for the poor. When a sewer collapsed, as happened to me recently, the cost is the same whether I have a small house or a large, more expensive one. I just don't have as much reserves to cover those costs. More deferred repairs are likely if funds are spent to remove a tenant rather than fix up the rental.

I understand that this bill is trying to give tenants more rights so they can maintain affordable homes but the reality is that it will give tenants less choice because it will drive more affordable rentals out of the market. Rents and security deposits will rise due to added costs, some owners of rentals will sell out or become more restrictive in screening and tenant opportunity for affordable housing will be less available.