



Testimony in Support of HB 2004

Chris Hewitt
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Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association, representing registered nurses providing care in almost every setting and community throughout the state, I urge you to support House Bill 2004 to end no-cause evictions and repeal the ban on rent stabilization. As nurses, ONA members recognize that when community members have affordable access to stable and safe housing, they are better able to address their most basic needs, leading to improved overall patient health outcomes.

Currently, no-cause evictions are used by some bad actor landlords to avoid the simple legal process for removing tenants. Instead of identifying a valid reason to remove a family from their home, leases are can be terminated to raise rents, or even worse, discriminate against certain tenants. Evictions with no reason and extreme rent increases cause immense financial hardship on working families that can lead to depleted finances, postponing of services needed to address vital health care needs and even potential homelessness. Moreover, these practices disproportionately impact families of color, seniors and people with disabilities, widening inequality and displacing some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

In addition, families across Oregon continue to face substantial rent increases that are forcing them out of their homes. Finding a new affordable apartment near their current home is a serious challenge in our state's highly competitive rental markets. Even if a family does not lose their home, large rent increases mean families spend an increasing portion of their income on housing, and less on other basic necessities like food, medicine, and heat. Four in ten Oregonians rent their home today; this translates to roughly 1.5 million people in our state being potentially vulnerable to unpredictable housing changes.

Evictions and economic displacement impact our entire system by placing immense economic burden on our communities through increased demands on social services, shelters, and hospitals by families who become houseless and other costs associated with the disruption caused by housing instability. Conversely, stable homes promote both educational opportunity for children and healthier outcomes for families – allowing Oregonians to save for a house, pursue new employment options, seek critical medicine and nutrition and also ensure continuing access to quality primary care.

HB 2004 will protect housing stability and help promote successful health outcomes in our communities. By creating a just cause eviction standard requiring legitimate reasons for termination and by repealing the state prohibition on local jurisdictions' ability to consider rent stabilization policies that can help curb the rate and speed of rent increases, HB 2004 represents an important step toward ensuring increased stability for patients and families.

ONA urges your support for HB 2004.