

Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the committee,

I am one of the 40% of Oregonians who rents their home. Since I originally moved here in 2005, I have moved more than ten times. Some of those times were because of new life opportunities, but more often than not it was because I could no longer afford the place I had called home. While I would love to someday be a homeowner, my student loan debt and related financial challenges have put that out-of-reach for the foreseeable future. But - I am proud to be a renter, because it means that I am independent and can provide for myself.

Recently, I have finally secured a rental outside of the Portland metro area that comes with a landlord who has given me verbal commitment they will not raise the rent more than 6% with each lease renewal. While a verbal commitment is not a legal one, I am choosing to believe that I can finally put down some roots in my new neighborhood in Oak Grove, OR - and that comes with an immense sense of relief and excitement.

I am looking forward to not having to change doctors again, or find a new veterinarian for my cat companion of 15 years. I am looking forward to sticking with the same grocery routine and commute to work. I am looking forward to building long term relationships with my neighbors, and elected officials, and for the first time since moving to Oregon - participating in local, community organizing with my new neighborhood in Oak Grove.

With all of that positive framing, I still know that I am relying on a verbal commitment from a landlord who is still a stranger to me and who is also trying to make a living for themselves in a state where demand for housing is increasing daily and rents are rising. I will do my best to continue believing his word for my own piece of mind, but I will not be surprised if I learn I was wrong. My situation is the exception in Oregon - not the rule. The majority of my peers and other community members are facing much less stable housing situations than I was successful in finding. And they also deserve peace of mind. I truly believe housing is a human right.

I would like to live in a state that has more protections in place for all tenants, and a state that is committed to its residents enough to say they don't need to be able to afford to be a homeowner in order to have that housing stability. HB2004 begins making the right steps in that commitment. I ask you for your yes vote on HB2004.

Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,

Jessica Junke

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