



March 1, 2017

Dear Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing,

On behalf of the Oregon chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW), we respectfully request your support for HB 2004 to end no-cause evictions and repeal the ban on rent stabilization. As the grassroots arm of the women's movement, NOW's purpose is to take action through intersectional grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life. We are part of the Fair Shot Coalition, and we urge Oregon legislators to act upon this opportunity to implement a just-cause eviction policy and lift the statewide prohibition on rent stabilization.

Many landlords are fair and do right by their tenants, but those bad actors who are using no-cause evictions to raise rents or even to discriminate against certain tenants are harming families and damaging communities. The risk of eviction for no reason and extreme rent increases make many renters afraid to request the most basic repairs, and result in extreme financial hardship on working families, the depletion of savings, deepening poverty, and even homelessness, which women are experiencing at increasing rates. According to federal estimates, the percentage of women at shelters has risen by ten percent (from 35 to 45 percent of people at shelters) since the recession. Further, these practices disproportionately impact communities of color and exacerbate inequities. Four in ten Oregonians rent their home; this translates to roughly 1.5 million people in our state being potentially vulnerable to unpredictable housing changes.

We support HB 2004 because it protects housing stability by creating a just cause eviction standard, requiring a legitimate reason for termination, such as a lease violation or a landlord's business or family necessity; and by repealing the state prohibition on local jurisdictions' ability to consider rent stabilization policies, such as ordinances that would slow the rate and speed of rent increases for tenants while still allowing landlords a reasonable rate of return.

We hope that you will join us in supporting HB 2004, which will help keep more families in their homes and create more economically stable and diverse communities.

Sincerely,

Lisa Frack for the Oregon state chapter of the National Organization for Women (Oregon NOW)
Sheila Swinford for Central Oregon Coast NOW
Bud Feules for Greater Portland NOW
TeriAnn Mason for High Desert NOW (chapter in formation)
Laurie Notaro for South Willamette Valley NOW