



March 2, 2017

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

On behalf of Portland Jobs with Justice, I respectfully request your support for HB 2004 to end no-cause evictions and repeal the ban on rent stabilization. Portland Jobs with Justice is a coalition of over 120 labor, faith, community, and student organizations taking action to support and defend workers' rights and economic justice through a racial and gender justice lens. We believe that includes the right to stable and affordable housing, which is why we strongly support HB 2004.

Eliminate no-cause evictions. Many landlords are doing right by their tenants. But many landlords are terminating leases to raise rents, instead of complying with the simple legal process for removing tenants. Instead of identifying a valid reason to remove a family from their home, bad landlords are using no-cause evictions to discriminate against certain tenants and deny them due process. No-cause evictions are also used to retaliate against tenants who ask for necessary repairs, making renters afraid to ask for decent living conditions. No-cause evictions cause immense financial hardship on working families that can force them to deplete their savings, force them into homelessness and send them into a spiral of poverty. These practices disproportionately impact families of color, worsening inequities and pulling communities apart.

Stop extreme rent increases. In addition, families across Oregon are experiencing extreme rent increases that are forcing them out of their homes and communities. 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 more of their income on housing, and less on other basic necessities like food, medicine, school supplies, and heat. 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.

Stable homes promote stable communities, community wellness and strengthen educational opportunities for children and economic stability and prosperity for all families – allowing Oregonians to save for a house, pursue new employment options, and open new businesses.

HB 2004 will protect housing stability by creating a just-cause eviction standard that will require a legitimate reason for termination, such as a lease violation or a landlord's business or family necessity. It will repeal the state prohibition on local jurisdictions' ability to consider rent stabilization policies that would slow the rate of rent increases for tenants while still allowing landlords a reasonable rate of return.

We hope that you will join us in support of HB 2004 to ensure that families in Oregon have homes that are stable and affordable. No one should live in constant fear of being displaced and losing their community, or even worse being forced into homelessness. We thank you for doing the right thing by protecting tenants' right to stable homes.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D Pei Wu', written in a cursive style.

D Pei Wu
Executive Director, Portland Jobs with Justice