

Good morning.

Chair Keny-Guyer

Members of the Committee

My name is Trell Anderson. As a kid, I experienced and witnessed evictions.

Today, luckily I am here as the Director of Community Development and Housing for Catholic Charities, and the Executive Director of Caritas Housing – the affordable housing arm of Catholic Charities. We have a portfolio of nearly 700 units of affordable housing, and it's growing. In addition to our current properties in the Portland metro area, we own property in Douglas County, and through a portfolio acquisition of 102 units, we are preserving properties that are currently subsidized, privately owned, and at risk of converting to market rate in Rogue River, Jackson County.

We are a mission-based, not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving low income people. I am here in support of HB2004 and the tenant protections it offers.

And I'm not alone here today. In addition to the individuals you have heard from, I have been asked to represent the 50 not-for-profit organizations who are members of the Oregon Opportunity Network – a group of like-minded, mission-based organizations that have a portfolio of over 30,000 units of affordable housing statewide. We provide a safe and secure place to sleep every night for some 74,000 men, women, children, Veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and working people. Together we provide housing across the state for a group of low income people the size of the City of Medford.

There is a stark contrast between the approach we take to prevent evictions, as not-for-profit housing providers, versus the approach that our counterparts take to maximize their profits.

You are hearing a lot of other testimony from for-profit landlords, their associations, and attorneys about the hardships of managing tenants, conflicts with tenants, tenant behavior, etc. Some even say they use no-cause evictions to protect other tenants. But let's not forget, no one here is suggesting taking away the tool of for-cause eviction. That will exist beyond HB2004.

As an experienced housing provider, as a landlord of nearly 700 units, I can offer you several counterpoints and alternatives to the use of no-cause eviction – to actually work with people to avoid evictions. In terms of managing people, I'll offer an example from last summer at one of our properties. We had 3 separate fights between residents, involving 6 different people, over typical things neighbors fight about: someone trampled another's flower bed; someone's kid was intimidating another one's kid; a step-parent argued with the aunt of child about where that child should be at that moment and time. These are nothing out of the ordinary, really, yet in a rental housing environment the situations are ripe for scrutiny by a landlord; and easy to for a landlord to handle with a no-cause eviction notice - under the current landlord tenant law. These situations are not easy, and with no-cause eviction as an option, many landlords take the easy way and just kick people out. No discussion. No process. No arbitration. No mediation. No chance for apologies or retribution. No opportunity for community service or penance. Just eviction.

Yet there is another way and we do it. Last summer, we offered alternatives such as: 1) vacate the unit within 90 days – give us your notice to vacate – here preserving the rental history and dignity of the resident as they apply for other housing; 2) agree to a mediation process with the other party – bringing in a 3<sup>rd</sup> party mediator from the County or local nonprofit at no cost to us or the residents; or 3) go to court, tell the judge your story, and live with a court mediated settlement – and we offer to pay the court fees. These options were

back by a for-cause eviction notice. Yet our goal is to always retain housing for people.

The options gave people choices, and invited them to live with the consequences of their choice. Through this process, we retained 4 of the 6 households at the property. They have been residents in good standing ever since. The other 2 residents choose to vacate their units and move on.

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Our deliberations here are similar to regulatory actions that other brave and sound minded legislators have taken for air and water pollution control, consumer protections in the banking industry, and information disclosure regulation in home mortgage predatory lending. When an industry runs wild in a heated market that it results in a negative impact on people and families, then intervention is necessary. That's where we are right now in Oregon with our hot housing market. That's why HB2004 is important.

Harvard sociologist Mathew Desmond published *Evicted* in 2016 – his observations and insights after spending 8 months in Milwaukie with tenants and landlords observing the process and impact of evictions. One of his conclusions is that evictions are now one of the core components to perpetuating the cycle of poverty. We have an opportunity with BH2004 to disrupt that cycle. For the sake of the low income children of Oregon, I hope we can get it done.

Thank you.