

Submitted Testimony to:  
**Committee Administrator**  
[hhs.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:hhs.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Rosalie Nowalk  
715 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oregon City, OR 97045  
503-997-9079  
March 1, 2017

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chairs Stark and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rosalie Nowalk, and I'm a renter.

Right now, I reside in Oregon City. I wish I could say that where I live, on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, is my home, but because of the precariousness of life as a renter in the state of Oregon, it doesn't feel that way. As a renter, you never know if it's worth trying to put down roots when the landlord can rip you up and spit you somewhere else at any moment and for absolutely no reason. For **No Cause**.

But whether your removal is done via a No-Cause eviction or an increase in rent that is too much to handle with all your other expenses – such as food. Such as health care. Such as school loans or child care. Transportation. Utilities. (Forget saving for a car or retirement someday – or maybe – gasp! -- buying your own place!) -- the simple truth is that what was once affordable is no longer so. And you must go. The question is: Where?

And really, what's the point if the same scenario can happen again at the new place -- and again and again and again? I'm sure there's plenty of renters who lay in bed at night (unable to sleep) thinking maybe it's the streets next time. And then they cry for their children.

**I've had two No-Cause evictions** since becoming a renter in 2006. I was a homeowner for 18 years before that, having sold in order to have some financial means to help in a small way when my two kids were in college. I had thought I'd eventually buy again, but then the recession hit and the investor vultures swooped in, driving up home prices, and as a result, rents.

So here I am. Living in a home that is not my home. Sometimes I get extremely stressed thinking how really stuck I am. Can't afford to buy a house and I'm one rent increase or surprise No-Cause away from saying the hell with it all and heading out into the forest. Did I mention **I'm 61 years old?**

When I received my second No-Cause eviction letter in 2014, less than a month after I'd moved into a duplex in the Montavilla neighborhood of Portland, I was stunned. I reached out to the landlady to find out what was going on, and she would not respond. Why should she?

The law was on her side. All she had to do to make me disappear was say be gone. She didn't have to bother with my silly question, "Why?" or to attempt to work things out.

Just: "**Rosalie Nowalk, you have 30 days to move,**" sterilely written, black ink on white.

Without her input, I racked my brain wondering what it was that was "causing" this No-Cause and the only thing I could come up with was that the landlady did not like being asked to give me 24 hours' notice before entering my unit. (She had appeared at my door unexpectedly late one night (9:00 pm) not too long after I'd moved in, wanting to do an inspection.) She did, then, give the required 24 hours' notice, but she also had a complete change in demeanor towards me from that point forward and which I assume led her to want to "do away" with me.

However, having been through one No-Cause already and because of the fact that I had just moved in and I certainly was not wanting to move again so soon (moving wears you out!), I knew I had to do something. And that something was hiring legal counsel and going to court.

**What the landlady was doing was not right, even if the law said she had the right to do it. It wasn't even human.** To me, it felt like retaliation for having asserted one of the meager rights I had as a tenant, which was 24 hours' notice before entry of premises (unless it's an emergency). My attorney thought that I had a case, but warned me that proving retaliation was not easy. In fact, it's hardly ever done. But I knew I couldn't live with myself if I didn't try to shine a light on this type of "landlording" by going before a court. I wondered how many others there had been before me -- or worse, still to come -- that had been so carelessly, callously treated in relation to **one of the most important aspects of life – shelter.**

I'll try to shorten this up a bit, because I know that you all have tons of testimony to sift through in the coming days.

**I lost at trial.** The judge said, basically, that unless and until things are changed regarding No-Cause evictions at the state level, my landlady was permitted to tell me to leave my home. It's funny/not funny, because in writing that last sentence, it reminded me of a remark the landlady had made and that stuck with me because it made me feel like such a nothing as a tenant:

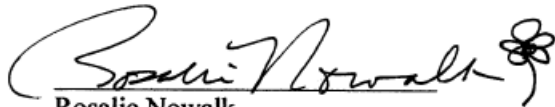
**"This is MY property and I'll do what I want!"**

Indeed, she got to do as she wanted because she could. And I got to pay HER attorney fees, originally billed at **\$7,677** (discounted down to \$5,500 as long as I didn't ask the judge for a reduction and as long as I didn't mention the landlady's name to anyone in regard to what she had put me through). And there was also moving costs, lost wages, and the emotion/physical toll from which I've yet to recover.

I don't think true justice was served, do you? Tenants are PEOPLE with the same rights to HOUSING as anyone else. I feel that housing is a human right, but I feel even more strongly that **a place to call "home" is a human right.**

**Please support tenant protections with HB 2004.** Please. For all the humans of Oregon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Rosalie Nowalk