

# SCANLON SHARP LLP

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Dear Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen, and Members of the Committee,

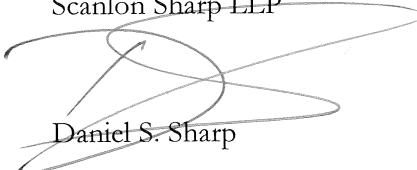
I am an attorney who resides in Portland and an advocate for tenant rights. I write to request your support for HB 2004A, ending Oregon's no-cause evictions and repealing the existing ban on rent stabilization. Such measures are necessary to provide basic protections and necessary stability for millions of Oregon tenants, which include children, the elderly and more vulnerable populations.

On a weekly basis, I receive inquiries from tenants who have received abrupt and dramatic increases in their rent or no cause eviction notices. In terms of the rent increases, they are often such that the tenant can no longer afford to live in their home of many years. These tenants are suddenly in a crisis situation where they are forced to find housing far from the community they have built, where they work, and where their children go to school. Many are faced with the prospect of homelessness. This is an unfair and unjust situation for any tenant to be placed in, especially for one who has always met their obligations as a tenant and lived within their community for years. What could be more disruptive to the lives of these tenants, their families and their community than suddenly being forced from their home due to a sudden and unreasonable rent increase? A vote allowing for rent stabilization measures is not a prohibition on rent increases. Rent stabilization is merely a measure to prevent rents from being raised unreasonably, or so rapidly, that tenants who are willing to pay increased rent are forced to vacate because they have not been given a fair opportunity to adjust to an increase.

Moving on, Oregon's no-cause evictions are being used improperly to evict tenants attempting to enforce basic tenant rights. Many tenants are simply ignored when they raise legitimate issues related to the habitability of their homes. I am often contacted by tenants that have been served with a no-cause eviction shortly after they made fair and reasonable requests that their landlords act in compliance with existing Oregon laws. Others state that they are fearful of receiving a no-cause eviction should they assert their limited rights, and instead they endure living in dreadful conditions. In short, the no-cause eviction is being used by certain, and unfortunately too many, unscrupulous landlords as a loophole to circumvent Oregon's existing landlord retaliation laws. The just cause provisions in HB 2004A would prevent such injustices by requiring a legitimate reason for termination of a tenancy (such as breach of the lease, family necessity, etc.). While there are decent landlords and property managers who do not engage in such practices, there are too many that are willing to use this process for improper purposes.

Currently, Oregon tenants are in crisis, and without real and meaningful change in accordance with HB 2004A, their situation will only worsen. It is not only tenants who will suffer without passage of HB 2004A, but instead all Oregonians who are concerned by the dramatic increase in homelessness and the appearance of inequity in this state, which prides itself in being fair and just to all its citizens.

Sincerely,  
Scanlon Sharp LLP



Daniel S. Sharp