

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

My name is David Simmons. I am a Family Physician living with my family in NE Portland. I ask that you support House Bill 2004. It is a critical step in curtailing the unbridled power of landlords in Portland and throughout the state, which until now has been limited only by the bounds of their greed and their willingness to prey on the working families of our city and state.

Safe, affordable, and secure housing are fundamental to the survival of every family, mine included. I have been a renter and single parent in Portland since 2004. Out of a sense of civic responsibility and duty to the underserved of Oregon, I made the decision to return to school to become a family physician. While a student at OHSU, I watched helplessly as the rental market careened out of control and my children and I were forced to find housing wherever we could: in friends' spare rooms, then basements, then backyards. Even now, on a resident MD salary, the two bedroom apartment my children and I shared became too costly; we were again forced to rely on the generosity of others to remain housed.

Many of the patients I care for have not had access to the resources I have. I see elders struggling to split the cost of rent and medications. I see young mothers choosing between an abusive spouse and life on the street as the cost of housing outstrips the ability to earn a living with one, or even two full-time jobs. I see men my age beginning to bear the ravages of food and housing insecurity in the form of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Each day, I see patient after patient wracked by depression and anxiety giving up hope in the face of increasing instability and uncertainty.

Study after study has demonstrated the direct, causal link between secure housing and the health of individuals and their communities. The 4 in 10 Oregon households that are renters need protection from eviction without cause and extreme and sudden rent increases. **We must act now.** We cannot build our way out of this problem.

I ask that you please support HB 2004A to provide fairness and stability all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

David Simmons, MD