

NO on HB 2004

I would like to take a moment and discuss HB 2004 with you. We had some landlords/ investors in the city of Portland cause a stir this year. Thus fueling the debate over rent control. I do not agree that those landlords thought through the consequences of a 100% rent increase or issuing no cause notices to entire buildings. They made it look as though this is standard practice and a frequent occurrence. It is not. As an industry employee of 17 years I can assure you, this is not the case. I recently had to use a no cause notice and deliver to 5 apartment units of a 183 unit building. These tenants were engaging in gang activity, drug dealing and a drive by shooting on property which hit three units. The only way for me to have actual proof of their behavior was to engage in surveillance myself, gather evidence and then take them to court. This could have been a long drawn out court battle costing my owner money and no certainty to the neighbors who were afraid of retaliation if they assisted me. As I am sure you can understand, I was concerned about my own safety as well as my employees and other residents. I issued no-cause notices and got them all out. It was a lengthy process but it ended in 90 days and provided a time frame to the other residents on when this nightmare would be over. I have testimony issued at the house hearing I can provide.

This bill is full of problems. First of which, is putting an end to the no cause notice without penalty. My owner would have had to pay those gang member, drug dealing tenants relocation assistance and have no guarantee of them actually leaving. They caused all of that trouble, and we have to pay them?

I ask you, if the sponsors of this bill thought that they were fighting the landlords displacing a ton of residents, why wouldn't they amend the bill with a cap of 5% of the property or some designated amount of units? Something to actually fight the issue of mass displacement. I asked the tenant coalitions that when we sat at a round table discussion, interviewed by the Portland Tribune. They told me..... "Because it still leaves the door open for discrimination and retaliation". That confused me. It confused me because the bill, as amended, says I can send a no-cause notice within the first six months of a MTM tenancy. Here are the unintended consequence of that amendment:

1. Landlords may opt to start tenancies as MTM as oppose to locking them in on a lease. Leases are contracts that protect both the landlord and the tenant.
2. Landlords can still issue a no-cause notice in the first six months. Wouldn't that open residents up to the susceptibility of MORE, not less, discrimination and retaliation claims? Landlords may jump to fast decisions without allowing tenants the proper method of curing any material violations for which they are protected under current statute.

In addition to my issue with the no cause termination tool removal, I have issue with removal of the statewide ban on rent control. What a mess Oregon will be with all different variations of rent control. I myself would be managing 5 different jurisdictions. As I am sure you are aware, the wonderful growth Oregon is seeing may slow. Supply is the issue and we are already seeing a Plateau on rent increases. The market will work itself out if we allow for the developments to move forward without constantly having to work around delay after delay.

In addition, I am sure you are aware of all the economists have to say about rent control. It's not a solution to our current problem. I am hopeful you will hear my message and my passion with regard to this bill. I am not an owner/developer. I am merely a person working on the front line, taking care of my properties and the residents who live there year after year. Please stop this bill in its tracks and help my fight to see this bill go down with a NO vote. This bill will not solve our housing issues at present.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jessica Blakely