

My name is Laura Cuccia-Nilsen, my partner and I were recently displaced from our home in the small coastal community of Netarts, in Tillamook County. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Oregon coast, Netarts has a small local population and many visitors throughout the spring and summer.

We began renting our home there just over a year ago and were welcomed by our neighbors. We quickly made new friends and bonded with the tight knit community, all sharing in the secret that the tourists only get to glimpse, that we have a little piece of paradise. Netarts has a relaxed atmosphere, where a sunset and a walk down the beach can melt away the day's worries and remind us of the many gifts that we have in this world.

Over the last year we learned that the property we were renting was in a state of disrepair and that the property managers had little to no support to address the concerns of the tenants. Lack of weatherproofing became apparent as the temperatures dropped and the rains increased. We bundled ourselves and put out buckets and fans to try to keep dry. We started looking for alternate housing and found that many of our neighbors were doing the same and finding options to be few to none. We also studied the Oregon Tenant Landlord Law and found that the law requires the landlord to keep the place habitable. We asked for repairs and in response we were served a 30-day no cause termination notice. In the middle of one of the coldest months of the year we were faced with the threat of losing our home.

Stricken with anxiety and fear, we were consumed with studying Oregon law and preparing for the possibility of defending our rights in court. We spent countless hours documenting our claims, writing letters, and speaking with paralegals and an attorney in order to find some security that we would be prepared and protected under the law. The uncertainty of whether our home would be taken from us was emotionally and physically draining. We depend on our home for our self-employment and supplement our earnings with part-time and seasonal work. We can't depend on our ability to work from home or pursue employment in our area without the security of a stable home.

Speaking with lawyers, we were warned how challenging our defense would be. We made the difficult decision to put our belongings into storage and reach out to other communities. The experience has been stressful and costly, and I look forward to returning to a sense of normalcy.

We are good tenants and responsible people, and we got a no-cause termination notice because we asked for repairs. Lack of housing pushed us out of our community and into uncertainty. My former home in Netarts, still unrepaired, with its leaking roof and unlawful conditions, now has new tenants. The cycle of abuse continues. I request to the committee to please support HB 2004 to provide fairness and stability for the millions of Oregonians who are renters.

Thank you.

Laura Cuccia-Nilsen
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