

Chair: Senator Sarah Gelser
Vice-Chair: Senator Alan Olsen
Member: Senator Michael Dembrow
Member: Senator Tim Knopp
Member: Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Re: HB 2004

I am writing regarding HB 2004. I attended and spoke at the public meeting on 5/3. I have to admit that I wasn't aware of all the issues at hand or all the facts. I knew that the bill was unjust simply from a logical (and emotional) standpoint but I learned a great deal from hearing both sides.

While the tenants have some truly sad stories and I understand how difficult it must be to have instability or fear of losing a place to live, the bottom line is this bill does nothing to solve the issue and in fact has the negative effect. It doesn't really matter whether you agree that tenants need help or agree that the landlords are unfairly being asked to shoulder the burden, what matters is whether this bill will work, **and it will not.**

This bill is not only counterproductive, but is also unjust in that it amounts to renters seizing property they don't own via majority vote. What proponents consider to be a cause is in fact extremely limited. I cannot imagine this bill would be upheld in court if challenged because it restricts homeowners unnecessarily in how they can use their own property. It instantaneously decreases the value of that property by increasing the risk of damage and the inability to maintain it without compensation.

There is also no way to set rent control. There are simply too many variables. This aspect alone will take a great deal of time to set up and in the amount of time it will take to get this in place, we could have instituted real solutions. In the meantime, Oregon will continue to lose investors and landlords and make the crisis even worse.

There are many aspects of this bill that I and many others believe are unconstitutional. There will be a lot of legal battles around this if it passes everyone will spend precious time and money fighting in courts instead of working on real solutions. If this was a bill with merit, it wouldn't have such opposition. We should find a solution that we can all stand behind. It may be difficult, but I believe it's your role to bring ideas together from both sides and work on a bill that people can rally behind. There have been too many town halls just focused on listening to arguments rather than holding town halls or meetings to come together and find solutions.

I realize some people are desperate and want stability, but we can't solve everyone's problems for them. I pay a lot of taxes both from my home, rentals, and income and I give to charities. My taxes support organizations and programs that help those in need. This is the way to help the less fortunate...by everyone giving equally and providing their fair share, not forcing someone to take on more than their fair share of the burden.

I don't necessarily have the solution, but I can offer up a suggestion. I believe the state should subsidize investors to quickly build more housing and try to attract the investors instead of chase them away. There will be more jobs and more revenue for the state. Once we get enough housing in place, the crisis will subside. By having the state subsidize, all Oregonians are carrying the burden, not just a small minority. I honestly believe we can build housing quicker than we can make this bill work.

As a landlord, I also might not be opposed to requiring a 90-day no-cause eviction notice rather than 30 days, but DO NOT take away my ability to remove tenants who are problematic. I will never support something so rash. 90 days would give tenants time to find a new residence and I think would be something that landlords can support.

I have never been so involved in politics as I have in the past year. But I also haven't felt such a need to defend my rights. I'm tired of how polarized everyone seems to be these days and I am willing to be part of helping find solutions. If you determine the right approach is to try to bring sides together to find a real solution, you can count me in.

Thank you for your consideration,
Michelle Barth
3049 Hayden Bridge Road
Springfield, OR 97477
541-517-4212; ron_michelle@comcast.net