

Rosenberg Corey

From: Evan Wellington <EvanWells6@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, May 05, 2017 4:53 PM
To: SHS Exhibits
Subject: Yes on HB 2004! No Amendments!

Dear legislators,

My name is Evan Wellington, I am an organizer with Portland Tenants United. I would like to express my appreciation for this committee and its consideration of this bill. With that said, here we are, at another juncture of its passage, and it is crucial that from here-on-out this bill not be stripped, altered or chipped away at the urging of a need for compromise that is not, in fact, warranted. The fact is that renter protections are needed in the strongest terms possible, because what we are currently facing is a housing disaster across the state, and for many families who have already been no-cause evicted, who have faced rent increases sometimes double the rent they were already paying, who are on their second or third move within five years or less, who are already homeless, it is a catastrophe.

And it is not just a problem for Portland, where I live. The Oregon Department of Education reported in 2015 that the number of homeless youth being served in our schools had increased 9% over the prior year, to 20,524 students across Oregon. The question is: How do people end up homeless? It is because there are no protections, and while some landlords and management companies will argue that this is a supply-side issue, the fact is that no zoning or land use changes, no incentives for new construction, even if those of the largest possible magnitude were made tomorrow, could manage to save the family facing eviction or economic eviction due to a rent increase within the next 10 years or more.

Landlord interests would have you believe that for-cause evictions prompt tenants to pull the strings of a court system that we all know is heavily leveraged in the owners and property managers favor, prompting them to pay exorbitant legal fees. I am sorry, but this flies in the face of the fact that 90% of landlords are represented in court, that landlords are the only power on the other side of the equation that often has the financial option of legal counsel. We have heard the argument that a no-cause eviction is the only option for problem tenants who put neighboring tenants at risk. This fails to consider that a tenant who is issued a no-cause eviction is still allowed a notice period of 30, to 60, or 90 days, and is no less likely to become a menace in the interim. Why tenants will be any more the aggressor when given a for-cause is anyone's guess.

Simply put, we cannot let false narratives or anecdotes that villainize tenants serve to compromise this bill down the line. No-cause should *never* be allowed, because you ask any person of color, anyone with kids, anyone with a disability, it is not a back door to discriminatory housing practices, it is a direct door to discriminatory housing practice and eviction. Exemptions for landlords based on number of units owned or any other criteria are unjust, because these are basic protections every tenant needs. Tenants need to be protected from retaliation, and need to feel secure in asking for repairs, lest they be no-cause evicted for what the landlord may consider as a nuisance in maintaining the basic living conditions of comfort and safety of their units. Landlords who need to reclaim their rental unit as a residence may do so as a for-cause. While tenants, who in all fairness

contribute to the equity that landlords are able to wield, as such should be entitled to relocation assistance, which, at the end of the day, someone has to pay.

After all, it makes little difference whether a tenant who faces a rent increase they cannot afford is landlord over by an owner of one, or of twenty units. Twenty-six students of Rigler Elementary will be losing their schools, and housing on July 1st at the end of the school year, due to a rent increase building -wide at the Normandy Apartment Complex in the Cully neighborhood in Portland. The complex is 18 units large. It would not be just if it were six kids in 10 units facing a school change, or three kids in 2 units facing a school change, and a disruption in their education due to an increase their family cannot afford. This is why, out of basic principle, and based on what chatter I have heard about changes to this bill that may be coming down the line, I oppose all amendments that risk watering down these basic protections.

Put simply, the more exemptions we allow on any of the terms outlined in this bill, the smaller the circle of protection gets for the most vulnerable, who have been subjected to a tragically unfair exchange since 1985, that between Landlord and tenant. Thank you.

Sincerely,

-Evan Wellington
Secretary, Portland Tenants United
503 432 0880

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