

I support LC18 -

To our elected leaders, who are charged with advocating for human dignity and the common good, I implore you to extend the eviction moratorium and offer my wholehearted support for LC18. This is not a matter of politics, it's a matter of humanity. It's not a matter of red tape, it's a matter of life and death.

I lead a network of communities called Pandemic Partners based out of Bend, Oregon. We started in March when the lockdown began, an effort to stay connected and help our neighbors through the pandemic. Together, we Crowdsource Kindness and do our best to make sure our most vulnerable neighbors have what they need to weather the storm of the pandemic. Pandemic Partners-Bend alone has almost 12,000 members, has participated in countless acts of kindness, and supported interim shelters for neighbors experiencing homelessness in the midst of smoke or freezing temperatures. I cannot tell you how many countless requests we have received from people who are facing eviction at the end of the month if the eviction moratorium is not extended. I cannot tell you how many people I have cried with on the phone, how many people are frayed to the point of breaking, how many people are terrified and hopeless. I can't tell you how many times I've had to say, "I'm so sorry, there's nothing I can do to help." I do my best to refer them to providers like Thrive and NeighborImpact, but I know that their caseloads are overwhelming and their staff is spread way too thin for the need that we're experiencing in Central Oregon.

It is a hard year, no doubt. This is not a magic bullet that will solve everyone's problems - but it is the most important place to start. Housing security allows everything else to begin to heal.

I know there are great costs, but I also know there are great resources. We just have to make the difficult choices to use them to help our most vulnerable neighbors. Please, please don't allow thousands of my neighbors, your constituents, to become homeless this winter. Do the right thing and protect their housing, so we can keep helping them get back on their feet.

I've had to say, "I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do to help." You can't say that - it is within your power to help. I join my voice with hundreds of thousands of others to say - we demand that you extend the eviction moratorium.

Thank you,  
Candace Bell