

January 31, 2019

To: Chair Fagan and Members of the Senate Housing Committee

Re: Support for SB 608, Tenant Protections

As a former tenant who has lived with and without rent stabilization I urged you to adopt this legislation.

My wife and I currently own our home in Bend, Oregon—a house that we initially rented. This was our third rental since moving to Bend. In two instances we were lucky. We had great landlords who treated us well. In one instance we were forced to move within 30 days simply because the owners decided that relatives should live there. We were fortunate that this was in 2004, during a period when there were more houses for rent and better economic choices for people looking for a place to rent. That, of course, is no longer the case in Bend where the rental vacancy rate is under three percent and falling.

Before moving to Bend I lived in an apartment building in New York City. When I moved to NYC in 1978 rent stabilization was the law. Since the city had done away with rent control, it adopted stabilization so that landlords could not dramatically increase rents of apartments that were no longer under rent control. A Rent Stabilization Board representing tenants and landlords set the maximum percentage of rent increase that was allowed each year.

Rent stabilization assured tenants that they would not suddenly experience huge rent increases. Tenants knew well in advance when and by how much their rent would increase, giving them time to prepare for their future. The percentages varied, but were never huge.

Yes, landlords squawked. And so did tenants. Sometimes no one was happy with what the Rent Stabilization Board did. But everyone knew what the law provided. And I really don't think landlords were forced out of business because they couldn't raise rents by more than 3-4 percent a year.

Tenants deserve sufficient notice when they are asked to vacate their rental home. They may not own the house, but it is their home. Landlords should not be able to evict tenants who are paying their rent on time without a good reason. Tenants should be informed well in advance what their rent increases are going to be and those increases should not be just so the landlord can make a huge profit. And landlords should be able to make a reasonable return on their investment.

SB 608 is good policy and should be adopted into law.

Thank you.

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