

Dear Senators of Oregon,

My name is Dom Belcastro, and I am a renter in Portland. I work in as a legal assistant in a law office in Southeast Portland, I graduated from Portland Community College and am currently attending Portland State University.

I am writing testimony for this bill to say that renters like myself who moved here in the past few decades are NOT the reason rents and housing prices skyrocketed. The decisions of landlords, real estate and investment groups, in the face of weak to nonexistent market regulations, are what created our current dire situation.

My time as a renter in Portland has lead me to move roughly every year due to cost and housing quality instability. I was no-cause evicted on New Year's Day 2014, along with five other households in my neighborhood due to our landlord unceremoniously cashing out on her two triplexes. Portland's Relocation Assistance, passed in 2017, would have gone a long way to protecting or at least helping us through that situation.

Restore Local Control: Especially hard hit cities need to be able to create their own rent regulations so they can properly respond to our housing crises. Portland renters need a rent freeze, not a 7-11% rent increase!

Remove Building Age Exceptions: All tenants need rent increase protections. The housing stock provided by private developers is not what is most needed right now -- most new construction is luxury housing that the average renter cannot afford. The solution is not to give landlords leeway to increase rents but to invest in public and below-market rate housing development.

Remove Quasi-For-Cause Eviction Powers: The 'three warnings and you're out' lease termination power established by this bill will ultimately lead to restrictive leases that tenants will have no power to negotiate down. Landlords and property management companies will be incentivized to surveil and harass tenants in order to skirt just-cause protections.

Remove 'Small Landlord' Exception: Proving your landlord owns more than four units, as a tenant, is near impossible. Our state is known as the 'Delaware of the West' for a reason: finding the true owner of a property can be incredibly difficult due to legal obfuscation through LLC ownership schemes. This exception will be abused, to many tenants' detriment if left in the bill.

Affirm Local Relocation Assistance: Senator Girod has proposed an [amendment](#) to pre-empt local relocation assistance ordinances. I see this proposed amendment as a highly anti-democratic measure that will only hurt tenants, like myself, and that it would turn back the clock on powerful legislation that Portland renters and advocates fought hard for. This bill should do the opposite, and affirm a locality's ability to create relocation assistance protections for tenants at cost to their landlords.