

To : Senate Housing Committee

The Honorable Sen. Shemia Fagan, Sen. Housing Committee Chair, and Sen. Fred Girod , Vice-Chair

Re: SB 608

My name is Marih Alyn-Claire, renter, and Tenant Advocate

I'm here speaking to the *urgent need* for protections for renters with very low/*fixed* incomes:

This includes: low wage earners, seniors, disabled, or medically fragile renters whose incomes range between \$800—1400/m who are receiving social security benefits, who have desperately tried to keep pace with rent increases over the past 4 years, receiving \$30, \$40, \$50, - \$100/m in annual rent increases and are already **out of money**.

Devastated and bewildered, as they are now facing the strong probability of experiencing homelessness in the near future.

**This tragic reality comes at a time as they are :**

- Incurring higher medical costs and some are active caregivers to their parents who live with them.
- Medically fragile (unable to work, ) up in aged (unlikely to be hired)

They are facing increasing rents, they can't possibly afford. Even a 2%- 10% rent increase is *out of reach* for many of them.

As a advocate, I've listened to tenants in meetings, in their homes, in interviews: saying , "We have nothing left".

They shared their stories:

- They gave up their car— because the money for car insurance is going to pay rent
- One Gresham senior, had no money left for or her medical device, infection set-in and she died
- Others forfeited their Medicare insurance, to keep up with rent increases
- Many cut down on buying groceries,
- Other like myself stop going to the doctor—avoiding co-pays

I'm asking our lawmakers how are we going to s protect this tenant population from cataclysmic disaster?"

**I'm suggesting a special exemption or hardship provision be considered .**

This summer I spoke with gov. Brown and she agreed that these renters are extremely vulnerable and at risk for displacement and homelessness. She stated she was willing to discuss some type of *exemption* for creating tenant protections for our most vulnerable renters.

**I therefore ask for your strong consideration, of creating an income- based safety- net with hardship provisions going forward.**

I appreciate your efforts towards enacting new laws that will help all renters, of all incomes, to maintain safe, affordable and stable homes.

Thank you for taking my testimony