

**Senate Committee on Housing  
Testimony - Community Alliance of Tenants  
February 4, 2019**

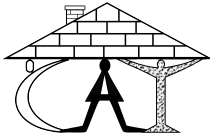
Dear Senate Housing Committee Members,

There is no new information, no new angle to take, no special words I can conjure up to convey the myriad of tragedies that have transpired for hundreds of thousands of renters across Oregon. No matter how we talk about it, no matter how we phrase it, the fact of the matter is that under current law, close to half of our population can have their housing stability decided by someone else, even if just on a whim. Unfettered control over another's housing stability is currently legally permitted as folks can legally get a 350% rent increase or be told they don't have a home anymore for no reason through a no cause eviction/termination. All of this is currently legal despite our state's commitment to equity; despite our state's commitment to the safety and stability of all its residents, and despite our commitment to healthy communities.

The effects over the last several decades have been nothing short of devastating: homelessness rising faster than we can keep up - ranking number 1 in the nation for the amount of homeless students in our state, teachers are living in their cars for a couple months after being newly hired at a school as they can't find housing they can afford, businesses calling our office complaining about losing employees because of being no cause evicted, and so much more. Our housing crisis demands a solution that is multi-faceted - investing in production, preserving affordable units, and by enacting common sense protective legislation like the one we are discussing today.

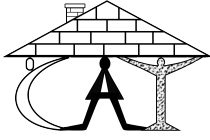
So Instead of rehashing all of these tragedies as I'm sure you'll hear plenty today - directly from those affected - I want to talk about the positive effects to our state if we take this leap forward by enacting SB608 into law:

- Some Teachers may see improved behavior and better focus in classrooms as less children are bogged down with the realities of new homelessness from involuntary displacement. Kids may be able to focus better.



- Doctors may be more successful in treating their patients without disruptive external factors at home, like an impending eviction or rent increase their patients' can't afford.
- Folks with health conditions may be better able to plan life altering (□and in some cases, life saving) surgeries because they may have a better idea of how their budgets will be impacted if their rent goes up a certain amount each year.
- Seniors who may have unexpectedly had to ration their prescriptions because their rent increased 50%, instead they may be able to better plan their budgets and find a way to afford their medication since they weren't gouged.
- A shelter in Gresham May no longer be able to say that no-cause evictions are the number 1 cause of families experiencing new homelessness.
- Grocery bills being slashed in half may lessen
- Families may be better able to save and stay put as they prepare to buy their first homes.
- Tenants may feel better about asking for a needed repair without the fear of retaliation through a no cause eviction, lessening the heart wrenching scenarios of people choosing to live in mold rather than ask for a repair out of fear of losing their homes.
- Victims of domestic violence may have better choices in leaving their abusers.
- Businesses may see less frequent turnover from their workers having to move far away and perhaps higher productivity from less stressed employees.
- Over a million people may have more opportunities to participate in our local economies, and feel less hesitant about doing so as their budgets become slightly more predictable.
- And in some cases, as research has demonstrated, we may see higher Housing Production Per Capita, than we previously did as recent Research has demonstrated that some rent stabilized cities have seen some of the highest rates of production than other places in the nation and have produced more housing per capita than their non-rent stabilized counterparts.

Now I want to be clear that SB608 is simply one piece of an ever-evolving puzzle. While it doesn't solve the entire housing crisis or solve for the hundreds of reasons for socioeconomic inequality, it certainly does take a giant leap forward by giving some measure of protection and predictability to



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hundreds of thousands of renters, in hundreds of cities in 35 counties across our state. As I've explained to many people in this building - many of us advocates in the room and our membership of thousands across the state feel that SB608 doesn't go far enough, but we all agree on one thing: SB608 is one step forward that **we have to take** toward a strong foundation of even greater fairness and stability. We **must** keep up this momentum.

As we look ahead to what our state might become as a result of greater chances of housing stability for 1.4 million Oregonians, we can all agree that not only is Oregon making history by passing SB608, but we're on the right side.

Thank you for your time and attention, and thank you for your consideration in passing SB608.

Warmly,

Katrina Holland  
Executive Director  
Community Alliance of Tenants