



Testimony in support of SB 608 - Tenant Protections Bill
Submitted by Eva Rippeteau for Oregon AFSCME Council 75

Dear Chair Fagan and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 608. Oregon AFSCME Council 75 has membership statewide including people working for local housing authorities, child care providers, Head Start Employees, public health workers, public defenders and many more who have seen the impacts of housing instability has had on the people they work with, their communities or who have experienced it first-hand. Truly every member, rural and urban, I have talked with over the past two years about housing has expressed the need for relief for renters and recognition that the costs of not getting out of this crisis is too great.

As you heard from Charlie Peirson, housing instability could mean arrests for living a life without access to indoor plumbing, a safe place to keep court documents or electricity for an alarm clock to ensure you make it to court on time. Each time a person is arrested, held in jail, and appears in court, that costs money on our strained public services budgets.

For our members in behavioral health, they worry about stable housing for their clients as well, and see the lack of options when the people they work with lose that stability through evictions or no longer being able to afford their home. Even if their clients are able to find a temporary safe place to sleep, the lack of permanency compounds issues they are experiencing and costing them valuable strides they have made in improving their health, sometimes disrupting their treatment all together beginning the cycle of bouncing in and out of emergency services another great cost on our overburdened public services.

For our child care and early learning providers, they see how the little ones and school agers in their care are impacted when their families lack housing stability. They see increased behavioral issues, a symptom of the stress the children feel. They see their school agers not doing as well with their school work they bring with them after care. And they know that the schools where these children attend are having trouble meeting the needs of these children whose families are struggling to keep a roof over their heads.

In public health housing is referred to as one of the "social determinants of health." Stable housing is foundational to improved health outcomes for individuals and for our communities. Stress of rent burdened households or the worry of being evicted puts all at risk for health problems associated with increased stress. When you take into account of the fear of reporting need for repairs to their home, they not only live with the stress of costs, they also live with the stress of living in an potentially unhealthy environment and potential risk of a "no-cause" eviction.

You have heard from plenty of others about the statistical impacts on individuals, but please also consider the increased and unnecessary burden housing instability causes on our strained public services, how providing paths to stable housing reduces the dependency on emergency and public safety services. Our communities are struggling; our most vulnerable are being hurt. Please take this important step in providing stable homes for renters. Please pass SB 608 to ensure we put parameters on no cause evictions, and ending incredibly high rent increases.