

From:
To: [Exhibits SHOUS](#)
Subject: Corrected Testimony for Senate Housing Committee -- SB 608
Date: Monday, February 4, 2019 4:44:44 PM
Attachments: [SB608_testimony.pdf](#)

My name is Soren Impey and I'm a tenant and volunteer organizer with Portland Tenants United.

Portlanders have been traumatized by a chronic housing crisis with a deficit of over ~50,000 units affordable to lower-income residents. This housing shortage has spurred speculative greed that has led to waves of displacement. Almost 50% of Portland renters are cost-burdened. In the past decade Portland has continued to lose affordable rental housing and over 75% of Portlanders earning less than \$45,000 are cost-burdened. Nationally, renters in the bottom income quintile have less than \$500 left over after paying rent.

PTU supports SB 608 provisions that limit landlord price-gouging and implement just cause eviction. However, we believe that this bill does not go far enough to address Oregon's rental housing emergency. Renter incomes have stagnated while rents have increased at rates far higher than inflation nationally and in the Portland metro area. A price-gouging cap of 10-12% will prevent predatory rent increases that have caused waves of economic evictions in the Portland area, but it will not mitigate unsustainable and unjust 6 and 7% annual rent increases.

I call on the Senate Housing Committee to amend this bill as follows:

The price-gouging cap should be modified to genuinely stabilize rent. I would suggest 1%+CPI - a 4-6% annual increase.

Exempting units built less than 15 years ago does nothing to address our chronic housing shortage. This provision should be removed or decreased.

Informal and economic evictions contribute to houselessness and cause severe financial trauma. 30 days notice for the 1st year does not provide enough time for tenants – and especially rent-burdened tenant to find housing. Tenants deserve a uniform 90 days notice.

Allowing landlords to evict after informal lease violation notices creates a loophole that can be exploited and provides tenants no legal recourse. This provision is unnecessary because landlords already have recourse in the courts.

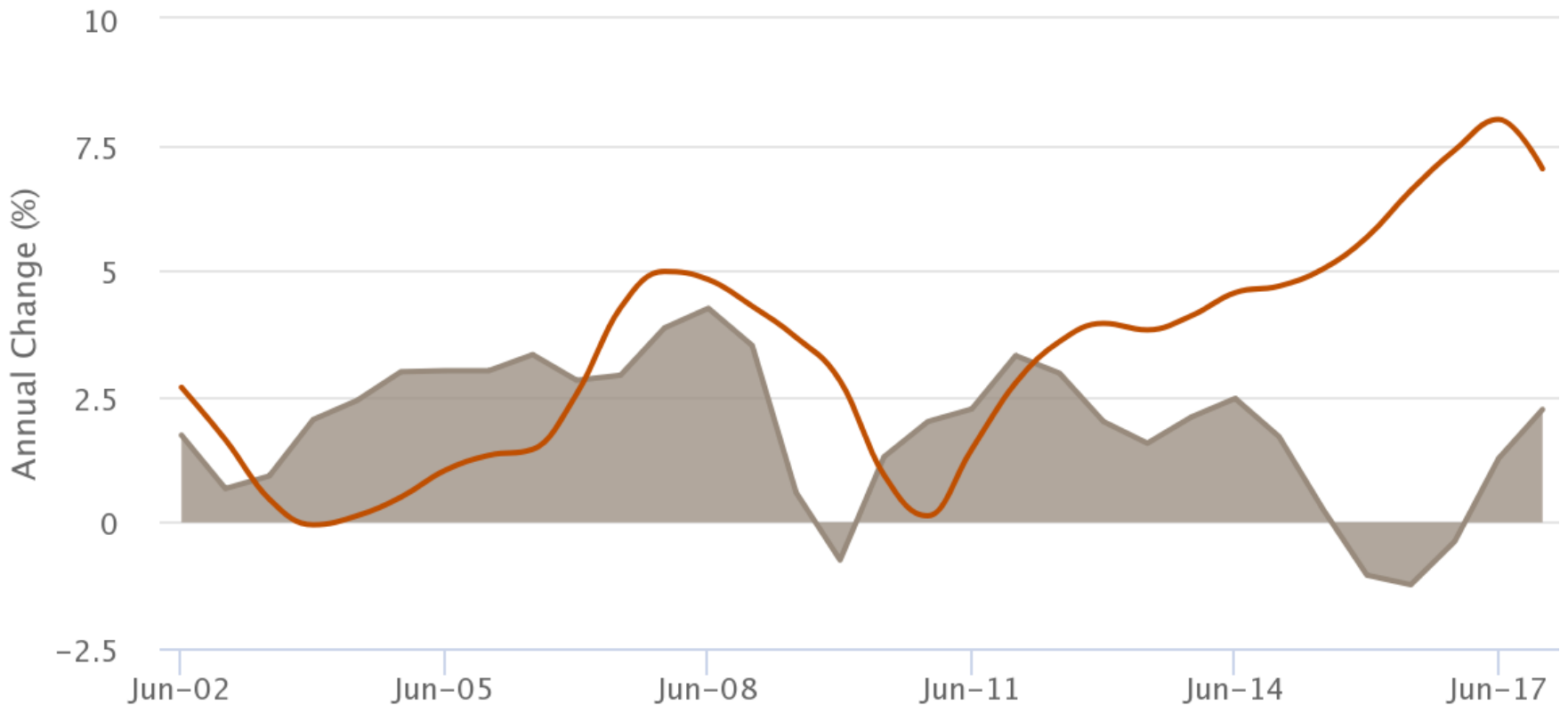
The relocation fee should reflect the true cost of eviction. Relocation fees should apply to all rental units, not only larger multifamily housing.

Rent increases should also be capped for vacant units. Landlords should not be incentivized to end tenant tenure.

Tenants often have no recourse other than court system when landlord refuses to perform basic habitability repairs or fix safety violations.

The rental housing crisis has also made tenants afraid to report basic habitation and safety issues. Rent increases should not be allowed for units that violate habitability and safety standards.

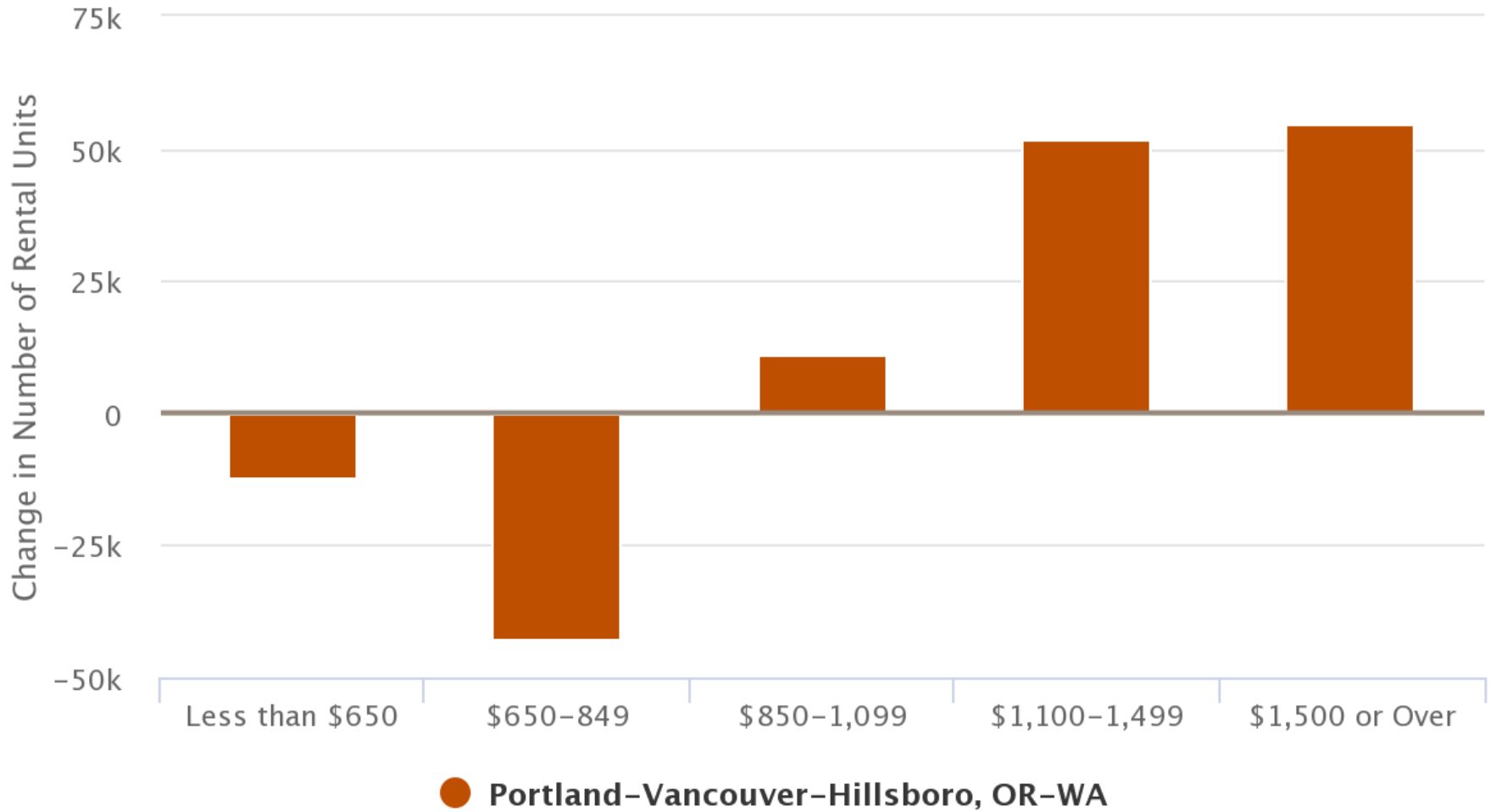
Rent Increases Relative to Inflation in Non-Housing Goods



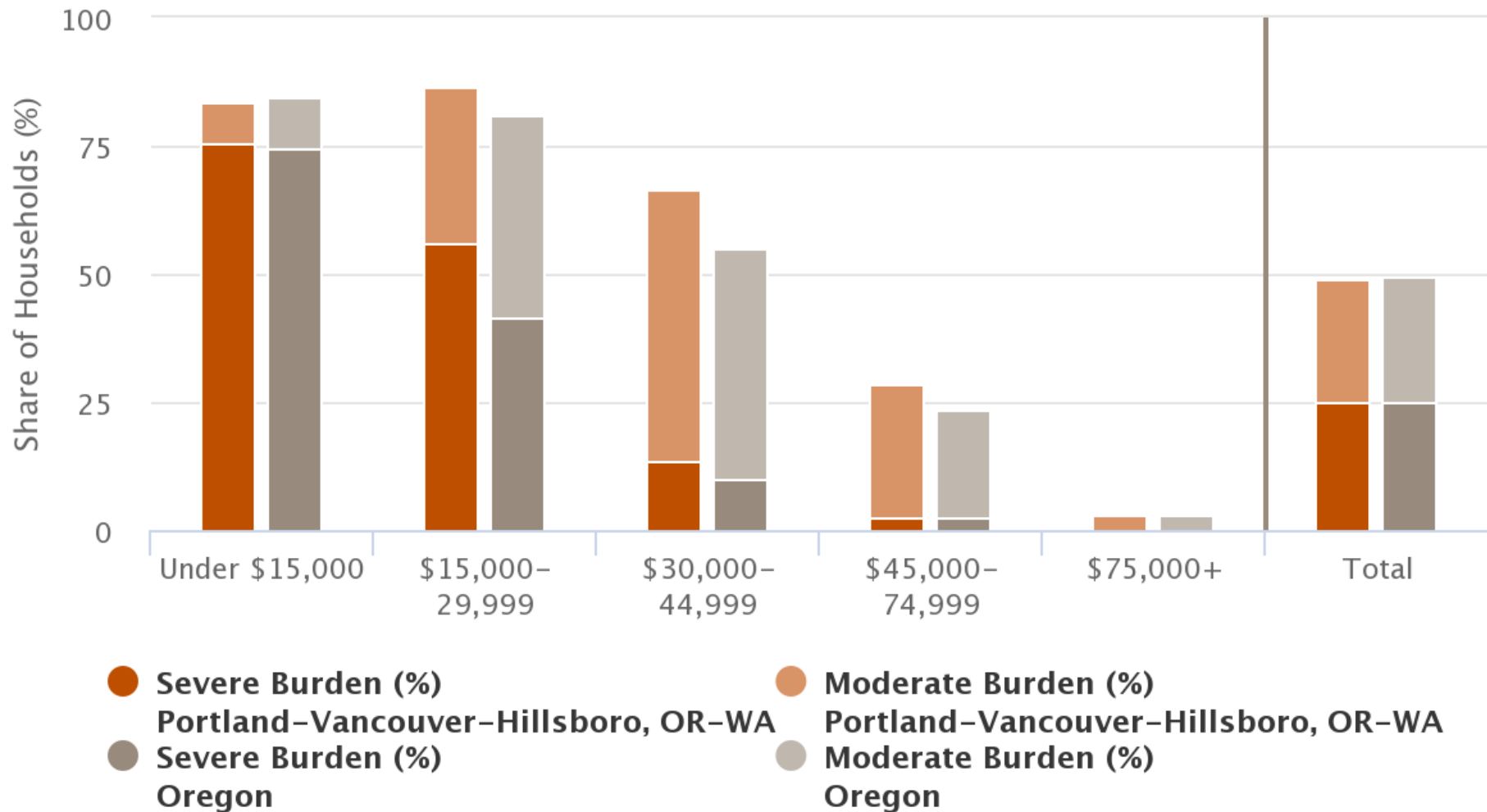
Portland – Salem, OR-WA

— Rent Growth ● Inflation (non-housing)

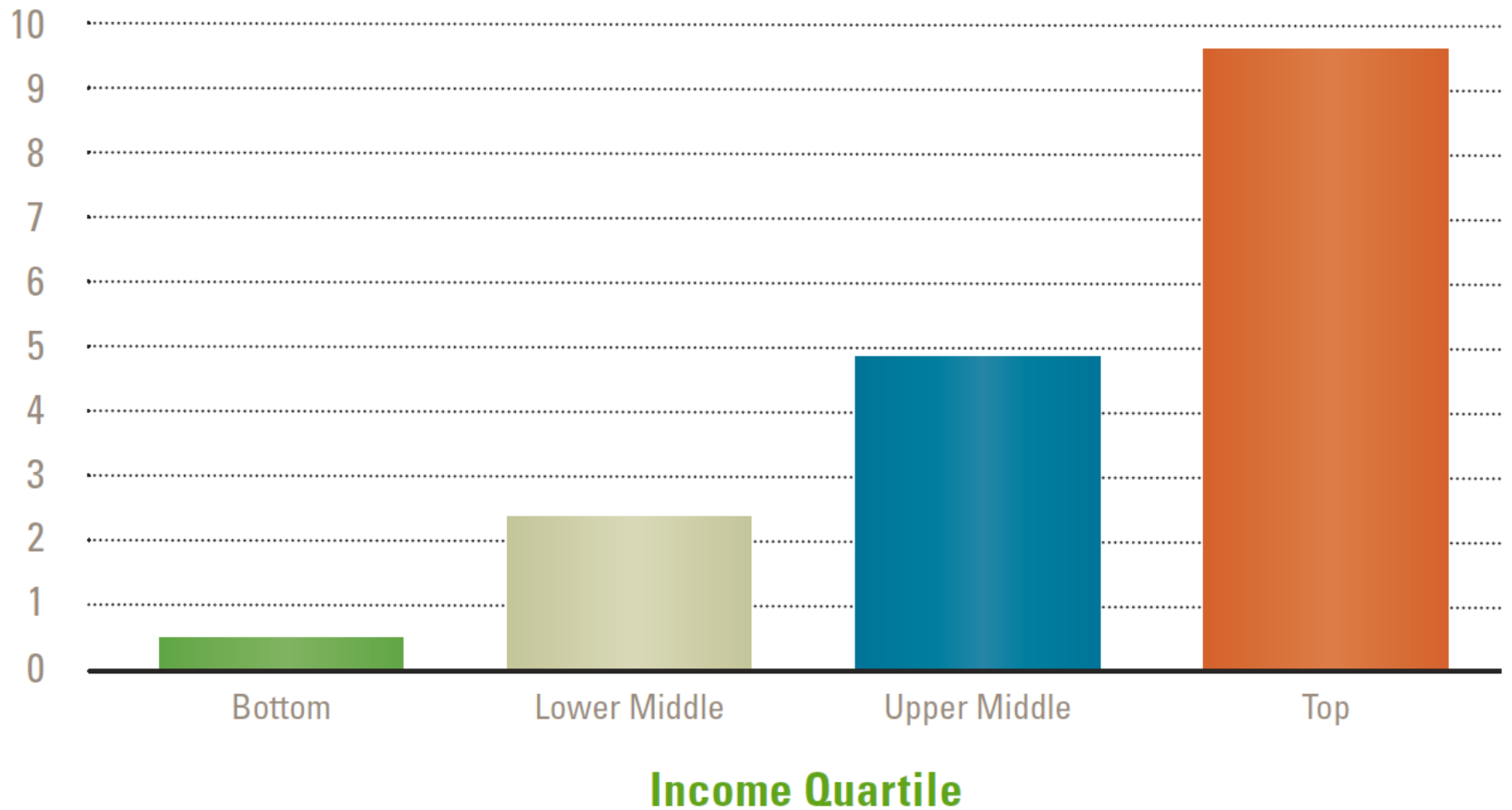
Change in Rental Units by Monthly Rent, 2006–2016



Renter Cost Burdens by Income



Median Income Left Over After Paying for Housing Costs (Thousands of dollars)

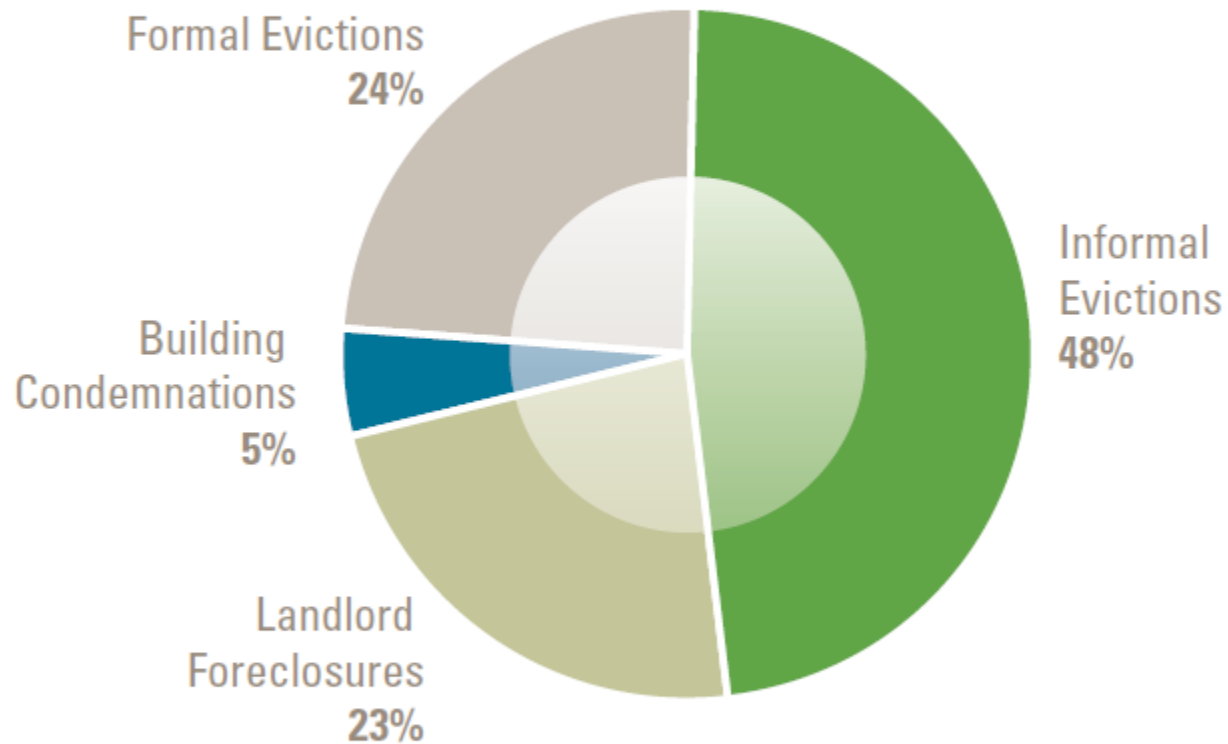


Notes: Income quartiles include both renters and owners. Housing costs include cash rent and utilities.

Source: JCHS tabulations of 2016 American Community Survey.

A Milwaukee Study Suggests that Informal Evictions May Be Twice as Frequent as Formal Evictions

Share of Forced Moves



Notes: Formal evictions are processed through the court system. Informal evictions include forced moves in cases where the tenants were threatened with eviction or moved in anticipation of eviction.

Source: Milwaukee Area Renters Study data reported in Desmond and Shollenberger, 2015.