



February 14, 2019

Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing,

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 608. The Fair Shot for All Coalition respectfully requests your support for this legislation because SB 608 improves protections for the 40% of Oregonians who are renters by stabilizing rents and ending no cause evictions. We support this bill because it addresses some of the inequities in housing and our economy, provides a statewide solution to a statewide problem, and promotes economic opportunity.

#### HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING

The housing challenges we face today are exacerbated by a history of discriminatory policy decisions and business practices over the last century that limited where people of color, especially Black Oregonians, could live and buy property. When African Americans moved to Portland to take jobs in the shipyards during World War II, the combined actions of government officials, real estate agents, and bankers pushed Black, Native and Asian families into specific areas of North and Northeast Portland:

- Banks, enabled by maps drawn by the federal government, refused to make home loans in Black neighborhoods.
- Real estate agents refused to sell homes in White neighborhoods to Black families.
- Appraisers artificially devalued the area's housing stock, limiting the ability of Black families who did own homes to build wealth.
- City officials changed zoning maps to limit the types of housing available in predominantly White neighborhoods.

We can see the legacy of this racial discrimination today in lower homeownership rates for Black families. Just 32% of African-Americans in Multnomah County owned homes in 2010, compared to 60% of Whites in the county. Furthermore, 69% of African-American renters in Multnomah County were spending more than 30% of their income on housing compared to 50.7% of Whites in 2010 (American Community Survey).

#### NO CAUSE EVICTIONS AND RISING RENTS TODAY

No-cause evictions are often used to retaliate, discriminate, and displace. No-cause evictions disproportionately impact communities of color, often in a discriminatory or retaliatory manner. With no-cause evictions, renters are not told why they are being kicked out and therefore have little recourse to defend themselves against unfair or unlawful eviction. As a result, many renters avoid asking for repairs even if their health or safety depends on it.

Evictions and rent increases result in homelessness and poverty. When a family loses their home, they have a small window of time to come up with what is often thousands of dollars to move in a market that is experiencing very low vacancy rates. Finding an affordable, vacant home on short notice often means moving away from their current school, daycare, support network, and place of employment. Seniors, people with disabilities, and people with health issues are particularly at risk when they lose access to their care providers and communities.

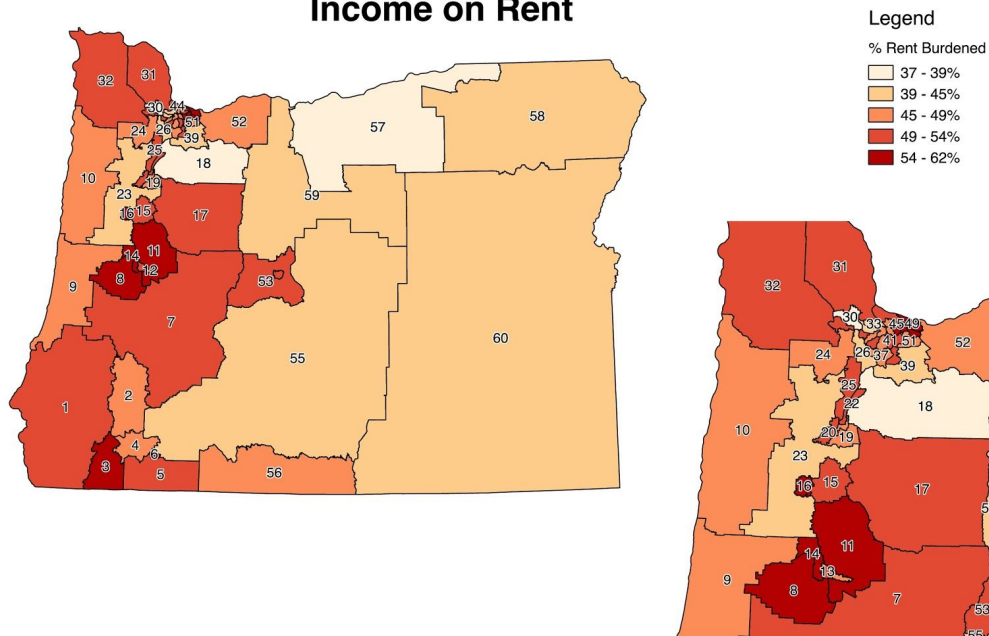
#### A STATEWIDE PROBLEM IN NEED OF A STATEWIDE SOLUTION

Because four in ten Oregonians rent their home, that means nearly 1.5 million people in our state are

vulnerable to unpredictable housing changes. Here's what the problem looks like in communities across the state:

- Many rural Oregonians face even greater housing cost burdens than in the Metro area: The counties with the top 10 housing cost burdens are: Josephine at #1, followed by Multnomah, then Jackson, Lane, Curry, Deschutes, Lincoln, Clatsop, Benton, and Linn according to the 2018 Oregon By The Numbers Report produced by OSU and the Ford Family Foundation.
- As shown in the attached map, every house district has more than 1/3 of renters paying more than 30% of their income toward rent. This means that 1/3 of renters in each house district are rent burdened. **And in many house districts across the state, this figure is much higher, with close to 54-62% of renters are rent burdened**
- As rents rise beyond folks income levels, we see increasing homeless populations across the state. 30% of students in the Butte Falls School District in Jackson County are homeless. That's the highest portion of students in the state. The top three counties with highest proportion of homeless students are: Jackson, Grant, and Curry.
- In addition to unregulated rent increases that price Oregon families out of homes, we know that some landlords are using no-cause evictions and extreme rent increases as a loophole to avoid the simple legal process for removing tenants. Instead of identifying a valid reason to remove a family from their home, bad actor landlords are terminating leases to raise rents, or even worse, discriminate against certain tenants, who are often people of color, immigrants, refugees, or people with disabilities.

### % of Renters Spending More than 30% of their Income on Rent



Data from American Community Survey - US Census Bureau

### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Oregonians have waited for far too long for these basic protections. As long as we allow no-cause evictions and huge rent increases in Oregon, we're putting our neighbors who rent their homes at risk of housing instability and homelessness.

All of this leads to eviction and displacement, which exacerbates social challenges in our communities by increasing demands on social services, law enforcement, shelters, and hospitals when people become

homeless. Evictions and displacement impact all of us--not just renters and landlords. Our businesses lose valued employees and potential new talent when families can't find or keep stable housing in communities throughout the state. Stable homes promote economic opportunity --allowing Oregonians to save for a house, pursue new employment options, and open new businesses.

#### ABOUT FAIR SHOT FOR ALL

Fair Shot For All is a united movement of more than 50 racial justice organizations, community groups and labor unions fighting together for racial, gender and economic justice. Our priorities tackle critical barriers to equity and opportunity for women, people of color, LGBTQ communities, immigrants and working families.

Fair Shot for All is made up of Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, AFT Oregon, Basic Rights Oregon, Bus Project, Causa Oregon, Coalition of Communities of Color, Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), Family Forward Oregon, Forward Together, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Northwest Workers' Justice Project, Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon AFSCME, Oregon Education Association, Oregon Latino Health Coalition (OLHC), Oregon National Organization for Women, Oregon Nurses Association, Oregon Student Association, Partnership for Safety and Justice, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon, Portland Jobs with Justice, Rural Organizing Project, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), Unite Oregon, Urban League of Portland, Voz Workers' Rights Education Project, and the YWCA.