

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chair Noble and Vice Chair Sanchez, and members of the committee,

I am a newly-elected City Councillor for Talent, writing to you on my own behalf, in support of Senate Bill 608.

We in Southern Oregon know that there is a housing crisis and that renters are hit particularly hard.

In Talent, almost 40 percent of households are rentals. According to our Housing Needs Analysis of 2017, 56 percent of renters are cost burdened.

We see this as an economics problem. And yes, that's true.

But on top of the challenges of having to make ends meet, renters are living in a constant state of anxiety.

Even if they do everything right, any day they might be forced out, either with an unexpected rent hike or a no-cause eviction.

As one renter told me: "It's an uphill battle every day. And it's making people angry."

A year ago I stood with tenants at Mariposa Apartments in Medford, protesting a rent increase of 40 percent. The property owner called it a "business decision."

Business decisions have consequences.

Until now, these consequences have been shouldered by everyone else: the tenants and their families; the tenants' employers; the schools where the kids are arriving late and tired; and the communities losing cohesion due to so much churn.

This bill won't solve the housing crisis. But it will help bring some peace of mind, stability, and dignity to people in my city, and communities all over Oregon.

I urge you to pass this long overdue legislation.

Thank you for your hard work.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Ponomareff
Talent City Council, Position 5
272 Rockfellow Pl
Talent, OR

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