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We believe that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence.

February 18, 2019

To: Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chairs Sanchez and Noble, and the House Human Services and Housing Committee

Re: Support for SB 608

On behalf of Raphael House of Portland, I am writing to ask for your critical support of SB 608, which would bolster tenant protections against unsustainable rent increases and no cause evictions for Oregonians who rent their homes.

We believe that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence. The mission of Raphael House of Portland is to engage our entire community in non-violent living through advocacy, education, and community outreach and by providing a safe haven from domestic violence. We have helped domestic violence survivors and their families find safety, hope, and independence for over 40 years. We believe that survivors cannot truly heal and thrive without stable and sustainable long term housing.

Over the past few years we have witnessed the majority of the families we work with struggle to gain ongoing safety and self-sufficiency due to housing instability linked to rising rents, and in many cases, no cause evictions. Many times, survivors of violence in our community are forced to make the impossible choice between homelessness for their family and returning to the abusive home they previously fled, as rent increases become more and more unaffordable.

In recent years, the housing crisis in the Portland metro area has had a profound effect on families that have come through our emergency shelter and housing programs after escaping intimate partner violence. It's increasingly difficult for families trying to get back on their feet to find housing that is affordable. Even once they are housed, the threat of a sudden rent increase is always looming and strips their sense of security as they work to rebuild their lives. In the past year, our agency has supported multiple families on the verge of homelessness in maintaining their housing with our limited emergency funds.

We believe that all Oregonians, including survivors of violence, deserve safe and sustainable housing for themselves and their families. We implore you to vote yes for SB 608 and put an end to extreme rent increases and no cause evictions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Vold  
Youth and Advocacy Services Manager  
Raphael House of Portland