



**Interfaith
Alliance on
Poverty**

2-15-19

To:

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chair Noble

Dear Representatives Keny-Guyer, Sanchez, Noble and Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing:

We are writing as part of the advocacy team of the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty. The Interfaith Alliance is a growing network of congregations committed to addressing the root causes of poverty in our community. We are members of the Oregon Housing Alliance and have been working in support of vulnerable members of our communities in the areas of housing, gentrification, wealth distribution, etc. Our congregations are home to landlords, renters, wealthy families, low-income families and people of all demographic groups. We understand the difficult task you face in striving to create an equitable, sustainable and cost-efficient set of state programs/practices that work for all Oregonians.

As faith communities, we recognize that our call is to protect the vulnerable and seek to do justice in all matters. This is not be place us against any party. Rather, we chose to adopt the preferential option for the poor.

We write to support SB 608, the 2019 Tenant Protection Bill. We urge you to consider the bill in detail and to vote to endorse its provisions. The Interfaith Alliance has watched and been party to numerous discussions around tenant protection for several years. The statewide housing crisis is on our door steps just as it is for all Oregonians. Our congregations have single, retirement age women who struggle with the fear of meeting annual rent increases while living on fixed incomes. One congregation hosts a homeless family day shelter and knows the story of parents with school age and younger children wracked by disappointment and shame as they try to juggle family obligations with job searches and attempts to save first and last month rent and security deposits.

SB 608 has a host of provisions that will provide some modest protection from these vulnerable families. We have seen no-cause evictions decimate whole communities; SB 608 would put some restraints on today's free-wheeling marketplace without locking landlords into untenable renter misbehavior as well as reasonable business reasons to change tenancy. The rent increase limits in the bill, quite frankly, appear overly generous to the advocates of the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty; and, we realize that months, if not years of negotiations, are behind these numbers and other features of the package. No bill is perfect. It appears to us that there is balance within SB 608.

We find SB 608 worthy of your support and **urge you to vote yes.**

A word about our admiration for your service. The legislative session has just begun; in fact, it never really ends. Your service to us, your Oregonian constituents, is extremely important to us and our families. Thank you for the time and talent you bring to that service. We are in your debt.

Sincerely,

Tom Hering Sarah Carolus

Co-Chairs, Advocacy Action Team
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty

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Interfaith Alliance on Poverty faith community members:

- * Ainsworth United Church of Christ
- * Augustana Lutheran Church
- * Central Lutheran Church
- * Congregation Beth Israel
- * First Unitarian Church of Portland
- * Fremont United Methodist Church
- * Genesis Community Fellowship
- * Grace Memorial Episcopal Church
- * Rose City Park Presbyterian Church
- * Rose City Park United Methodist Church
- * St Andrew Catholic Church
- * St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Parish / The Madeleine Parish
- * Westminster Presbyterian Church

* West Unitarian Universalist

www.allianceonpoverty.org