

LC18 is not enough

To whom it may concern,

I am a Portland resident of 10 years. I have been living in my apartment with my dog and partner for nearly 5 years. This is my home.

Growing up in foster care I did not get a chance to feel at home. As soon as I was somewhat settled into a new place, I would be moved to another. It felt like a cruel sick joke after a while. The longest I stayed in one place was approximately 3 months.

I moved to Portland in hopes of living in a house, not an apartment and getting a dog. Rent was affordable at the time. I got the dog! (Picture attached.)

I lived in house for 2 months until the landlord decided to sell his home and wanted to move into ours. 2 months in my entire adult life that I didn't share a washer and dryer and then it was taken for no other reason other than greed. I hope you can sense my disappointment here.

This apartment of 5 years is the first time it felt ok to be living in a city that was rapidly changing and rents all around me increasing. Every single one of my friends have lost their homes at a landlords discretion. People that work 40-60 hours a week to make rent and buy food. I personally worked just as much if not more as my own rent kept increasing.

I am currently a full time student at PCC working towards my degree in Social Work/family and human services so I am quite familiar with macro systems. I will be transferring to PSU next fall where I will be getting my bachelors degree. When the pandemic first took its toll on my city; my school shut down and my part time job laid me off. My partner got laid off as well. I was able to get unemployment, my partner was not for months.

Unemployment was just enough to pay bills and for food. A few months in I was faced with the difficult decision to either pay rent or buy food. I chose the latter. I chose food because of the moratorium.

In July extra unemployment dropped and I was only receiving 133 dollars a week. My partner was able to go back to work, part time. Since then we have been paying what we can for rent, but we now owe about \$4,000 and every month we're not sure if this is going to be the month that completely does us in.

On top of the potential of contracting COVID 19, we are worried that there isn't going to be any help from the government. I have applied to a handful of rental assistance programs and they have either reached their application capacity or they run out of funds quickly.

LC18 is a bandaid. What residents of Oregon need is a rent cancellation. Without rent cancellation we are not going to be able to pay our debt which will then cause us to be evicted. Without an income and a negative mark on our rental history we will not be able to afford or be accepted into a new rental. This will be a free for all for wealthy investors to buy up a bunch of properties that will sit unoccupied and then we will be looking at a housing bubble.

This plea to cancel rent is not coming from freeloading grifters trying to get away with not paying rent, it's coming from hardworking students and essential workers that need you, elected officials to do your jobs to ensure the safety and well being of all Oregonians.

I have spent a lot of time calling and writing to Kate Brown and now I'm sending this testimony in hopes that you will not ignore us again and do what is vital for the survival of everyone in the state of Oregon. LC18 is not enough. Cancel rent today and any relief money should not be funding landlord bailouts. Housing is a human right.

Thank you,

Amanda Richardson

Attached is my dog Fargo who is also at risk of being homeless if rent is not cancelled. Please listen to us.

