

December 16, 2020

Re: Support for LC 18, extending eviction moratorium and the rental assistance program.

Co-Chairs President Courtney & Speaker Tina Kotek, Co-Vice Chairs Sen. Girod and Rep. Drazen, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Bernabe Ruiz. I represent my community in NE Portland. I am writing in support of extending the eviction moratorium through June of 2021 to help families get through the school year.

I got to Portland for the first time in 2004. Before I got housing I was homeless for 14 years, traveling all over different cities with no direction. In 2017 I got housing in Portland. Ever since I have developed very good relationships. I have strong connections in my neighborhood; it has become a big family. Since COVID 19 started we have developed even more family connections, because we all have been in the same boat, stressed and worried about losing housing. I think we all suffer emotionally if any of us lose our place. I know a lot of us have problems with rent in the community. My neighbors have been trying to talk to the landlord, but the landlord hired an agency to go in between.

For instance three of my neighbors have already left because they weren't able to pay \$1800 for a two-bedroom apartment. That was two months ago. More tenants are considering leaving, because they aren't economically able to pay the rent and will end up homeless. My neighbor above me works as a bartender, and because of COVID 19 she hasn't had many hours and hasn't been able to pay rent. She owes a lot of back rent that she has no way of paying. I would be a lonely wolf without those folks in the neighborhood.

I would ask the committee to think about us, and all the people who would be damaged if the moratorium weren't continued. Losing those family connections and good friendships. I would like to do whatever is in my power for that not to happen.

I understand that my landlord needs help as well, because they live off of what the tenant pays. That's why I strongly support the \$200 million package in this bill. There should be a landlord compensation fund that helps smaller landlords with back rent so they won't have to evict if they are financial straits, and also a rental assistance fund to help those tenants who will need assistance moving forward or whose landlords don't apply for the fund.

Thanks for your time reading my statement.

Attentively,
-Bernabe Ruiz