

Hello,

I oppose LC-18.

I have represented landlords for the past three decades. The cavalcade of new laws flowing from the halls of the Oregon legislature has done nothing but increase the burdens imposed upon, and the risks faced by, Oregon landlords. The legislature has unilaterally and intentionally made the costs and risks associated with being a landlord so high that you're (a) driving mom and pops out of the business (thereby diminishing the number of houses available to rent); (b) taking away monies that would otherwise be available for repairs and maintenance; (c) causing larger landlords to fire the very staff that was hired to help tenants with their needs; and (d) driving many landlords toward bankruptcy.

At the same time that you're crushing landlords, you're not giving them breaks on taxes or other governmental obligations.

Focusing more keenly upon the various iterations of the moratoriums, you unilaterally determined that (a) you won't pay for tenants to be housed, and (b) landlords must pay for the housing you're requiring them to provide tenants. The landlords who are providing housing consistent with your government-required mandates must continue paying mortgages, taxes, insurance, maintenance, repairs, and so on.

Now, let's move from historical problems onto our discussion of LC-18....

The offer of 80% rent assistance in consideration for the landlord's required forgiveness of 20% of the tenant's rent fails to take into account the fact that innumerable landlords operate on margins that are less than 20%. In other words, receiving 80% of the back rent doesn't make them whole, let alone break even. At the same time, the tenant has no skin in the game. Instead, you required the landlord to pay for the tenant's housing... at a loss to the landlord. Why not have the tenant pay the other 20%? Why should the tenant be provided free housing? If the tenant has the 20% to pay, why not require them to pay it? What did the tenants do, in order to get a freebie from the government?

You're setting the Oregon rental housing industry up for a wholly predictable outcome: You're eliminating any good reason to develop rental housing in Oregon. (I have multi-state clients telling me that they've scrapped plans to invest in Oregon, due to the proliferation of anti-landlord laws.) Your attacks will ensure a lack of sufficient housing to cover future needs. Tie that into the reality of supply and demand, and you'll quickly realize that you're not accomplishing anything you purport to be accomplishing.

I'd bet that legislators are – on average – intelligent individuals. I'd bet that legislators know that these short term, constituent pandering, fixes are going to be harmful to future tenants. I'd also bet that legislators are assuming that tenants won't understand the long term ramifications of the passage of anti-landlord laws and that legislators will use future facts in any way they have to, in order to spin historical and then-present needs. In short, I humbly opine that you're pulling the wool over tenants' eyes in the guise of pro-tenant laws, when the reality (i.e., the real-world impact) of anti-landlord laws will harm tenants' interests in the long run.

The success of Oregon tenants is wholly contingent upon their ability to locate and occupy rental property. To that end, you should reward landlords for their role in providing rental opportunities to current and future tenants.

The success of landlord/tenant relationships rests upon the parties' ability to enter into and maintain such relationships. Without landlords or tenants, the other wouldn't exist.

If you keep attacking landlords – as you have been, are, and seem to intend to keep on doing – you're actually harming tenants. If the foregoing statement doesn't make sense, then I fear that you may support a law which you don't understand.

Hence, the reason why I oppose LC-18.

Respectfully, Jeff Bennett

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