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Dear Legislators: I am a “reluctant landlord” who purchased a residential property in Ontario, Oregon in order to provide my youngest son a place of refuge away from the life-ruining influences that he was surrounded by where we live and where he grew up. Having attempted to find housing for 6 months and finding zero vacancies available, we decided to purchase a property to provide him a home while in college and to rent the other rooms to other college students. The intention was to provide him an opportunity to try a small college with smaller classrooms as his disabilities make it difficult for him to learn in a school setting and he did not plan on college.

We did not do this because we are wealthy. I have a small lawn business I run by myself and my wife is a cashier at Sam's Club. We never planned on becoming landlords. We did this to save my son. The only financial way we could afford to make this work is to run it as a business.

My small lawn business must have customers to stay solvent; to pay for all the expenses that allow me to run the business and make a modest income. I could not afford to run the business “for free” which would happen if you suddenly forced me to charge only half of what each bill must be in order to continue to stay solvent.

Renting this property is just like any other business. The renters I house are my customers and they provide rent which pays the many expenses that come with a rental property including the huge annual property tax bill that is triple what we pay for our property in another state. If my customers do not pay for the services I provide, then I cannot afford to provide them housing any longer and will lose the property and the business.

We cannot afford to sustain this enterprise out of our own pockets just like any other business. If you make it so our customers no longer have to pay for the services rendered, or pay only a small portion, you will force us to a position of bankruptcy by removing the income that keeps this operation afloat.

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