

I am writing today to express my concern to our hard-working legislators regarding landlord and tenant rights. First let me say that I appreciate the hard work of all of those who serve the public in the legislature.

I am a native fifth generation Oregonian. I have worked since I was 7 starting with picking berries, delivering papers and many other jobs. Now My wife and I own a few apartments, which is a big part of our retirement funding. Many public employees have better retirement funding than we do. One of our tenants stopped paying rent seven or eight months ago. This is a significant hardship and drain on our retirement funding. If all of our tenants did this we would be broke very quickly. When you take away our Landlord eviction rights, you are directly taking from me and that can't be constitutional. The Equal Protection Clause is the first that comes to mind. Property rights are a bedrock of our system of government. You must protect property rights.

I have been a tenant and understand their world. We all need a good world to work in, but giveaways come from somewhere. Landlord tenant laws are becoming fundamentally unfair. When that happens, history shows us that there are always significant side effects. While evictions are painful, the landlord has no other way to protect him or herself from failure and bankruptcy. Take away property rights and pretty soon, no one will want to invest in Oregon.

If society wants to help tenants I get that. I want to help tenants. However, when landlords are singled out, that creates fundamental unfairness which will never work in the long run. Such a direct taking reminds me of the sorts of things that happened in Venezuela and in the old Soviet Union. Just take from the landlord is an easy slogan and sales pitch, but landlords are not the rich. All of those who have a PERS account could be considered rich. Why don't they share in the pain of helping out the tenants? Why doesn't everybody share the pain of helping out the tenants? Why punish those of us who worked hard and saved a little bit of money? Why not punish farmers? State workers? Federal workers? High-tech workers? If you want to help folks out in a time of need, then we all should chip in together through some sort of tax or other program.

While I applaud the hard work our legislators are doing to try to help those especially needy during the pandemic, I ask that the legislators please keep fairness ultimately in mind. I have been a lawyer in Oregon for 36 years. One thing I have learned is that unfairness doesn't work out well. That is what lawsuits are made of. Juries always strive for fairness. Our society is built in many ways on being reasonably fair within limits. Landlord tenant laws which continue to take from landlords without giving back smacks of fundamental unfairness. It won't work in the long run. Please keep fairness and the long run in mind as you complete your hard work addressing this difficult time.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Tim

Sent from my iPhone