

Dear Members of the Joint Interim Committee,

I'm writing to ask for your help in preventing evictions in Oregon. I have been homeless a few times in my life. The first time I was eight months pregnant, struggled to stay warm at night, and slept underneath a freeway overpass. I have also been homeless with my first husband, who is a Vietnam Veteran, and our children. When we did receive shelter, we were forced to sleep apart.

I am now despondent over the situation that many people here in Oregon face who have been evicted. I personally know many tenants who are holding on to see whether their families will be forced to leave their homes and live on the cold winter streets, because they have no money. These families are holding on to what little hope they have until the Special Session will be held on December 11th.

Some families have applied for rental assistance and qualified for that assistance but never received any help, because there were not enough people hired to work and process the checks, or because a clerical error caused bad checks to be sent out, making their rental payments void. These completely preventable evictions are happening despite the "Safe Harbor" that promised protection. People shouldn't have to suffer and become homeless, because the government made mistakes.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been suffered unequally, with the most vulnerable facing greater disruption and greater economic insecurity. Evictions result in major disruptions to families' lives, creating real hardship and additional demands for public resources at a time where our systems are already strained to the breaking point. The upcoming special session must be the start of creating lasting security for Oregonians threatened by evictions. What is needed includes:

- A moratorium on evictions, including no-cause evictions, for all Oregon tenants until June of 2023.
- Reducing annual rent increases to no more than 3% above the consumer inflation rate until at least 2023 or our economy stabilizes from this inflationary period.
- Using state funding resources as a bridge until more federal rent assistance is offered.
- Imposing a penalty on landlords who threaten eviction or evict tenants during the moratorium, allowing tenants to sue for 3x the rent.
- Providing compensation to tenants evicted for non-payment to cover the cost of moving, deposits, items lost in eviction, etc..
- Using low-barrier attestation as the primary method for all applicants for rental assistance, reducing complications and moving money out the door quickly.
- Resolving to create a permanent housing safety net system for Oregon.

Know that myself and thousands of other Oregonians' lives are in your hands as the upcoming Special Session approaches. Thank you for any help you can provide.

Sincerely,

Jaime Carleton

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