

Submitter: Tobi Walker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

Dear Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tobi Walker. I am a tenant living in Woodburn, but I am currently moving to Gresham. I'm writing today in support of Senate Bill 611.

As a disabled senior, opportunities to increase my income are limited. Increases in Social Security are almost never enough to cover rent increases. This year I was lucky -- my rent went up only \$50 and an unusually large increase in Social Security benefits covers it. Next year I might not be so fortunate -- my rent could go up 14.6%, a \$124.00 bump up to \$975 a month. I suspect that, in about 5 years of this, I'd be rent-insecure.

Landlords want to profit. They're willing to take government money to keep rents high. They suffer inflation, too, but landlords need to profit long-term on the investment in their buildings, not increase rent beyond what the public can afford to pay short term. It's sad that we need the government to put ceilings on private markets but, in this case, that ceiling may be necessary to prevent intensifying the homelessness that's reached crisis levels.

For six years I have been on a subsidized housing list in Gresham and that apartment has finally come up -- I am moving in the next few weeks. I will be safe as I age but there are thousands of other extremely low-income disabled and elderly people struggling to afford housing. We mustn't be agisted and give them some special break -- struggling families, single people and all sorts of other folks are suffering economic hardship these days. Rent has to be manageable in order for folks to pay it. Anything else is courting disaster. Are seniors going to be the next group to take up residency on the streets?

Thank you for your consideration on this common sense bill.

Tobi Walker