

Submitter: Thomas Hiura

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Lawmaker of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my enthusiastic support of SB 611. My name is Thomas Hiura and I am a lifelong Eugene resident, though I experienced homelessness in 2019 and 2020. I am also an appointed City of Eugene Human Rights Commissioner, the Vice Chair of the Community Center for Performing Arts (WOW Hall) Board of Directors, and the owner/CEO of an independent recording studio. I am speaking today as a private individual whose basic livelihood and shelter became much more tenuous after a 14.2% hike in my monthly rent this year.

My father spent some of his later years as a landlord, so I understand and appreciate the work that goes into responsible property management. I see folks in this situation and in their tenants' situation trying to do the exact same thing: make a living, provide enough for their families, survive securely and maybe even thrive. I don't view this as an "us vs. them" issue as much as a simple question of the state government's role. Individuals are doing compassionate and humane work in Oregon every single day... and it is not enough.

I believe the Oregon Senate must pass SB 611 to protect everyday Oregonians from displacement and even more acute forms of poverty. This protection would be good for everyone, because the fundamentals of our society and economy rely on a critical mass of the public having safe housing. I have a front-row seat to the immense difficulty of re-stabilizing one's life after becoming homeless. It is something my father never did successfully before dying of Covid-19 in 2021.

Please pass SB 611 as soon as you can. Thank you for your tireless and largely uncompensated work on behalf of Oregonians, while serving in our citizen-legislature.

Best,
Thomas Hiura