



27 March 2023

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Committee on Housing:

My name is Jimmy Jones, and I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency in Salem. We serve low-income residents of Marion, Polk and nine other counties across Oregon. Annually we provide more than \$70 million in services and direct client assistance for housing, homelessness, energy and weatherization, and early learning programs to more than 55,000 Oregonians in poverty, in addition to a range of emergency services that shelter the homeless and serve wildfire victims. I also serve as the Vice President for Legislative Affairs at the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, and sit on the Housing Committee of the Racial Justice Council and the House Bill 2100 Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities. And for many years, I have been an advocate for the homeless residents of our state.

We write in Support of Senate Bill 611, which will provide common sense protections to Oregon's vulnerable rental population, and ensure that aging senior citizens, the disabled, and people of color in particular will be able to stay in their homes. SB 611 will prevent eviction causing rental spikes, and protect renters whose tenancies are terminated through no fault of their own. And it will align with the many other measures the Legislature has supported and funded to address Oregon's enormous housing crisis, and the gathering storm around unsheltered homelessness.

The summer of 2023 will be a difficult time for people in poverty. Inflation remains high, and unlike butter, eggs, and gasoline, rent increases are baked into the system and never decline with variable market forces. We are on the precipice of a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> reduction in SNAP benefits, an expected loss of up to 300,000 from the roles of OHP, a 15 percent rent increase and a possible recession. We need to do everything we can to protect renters now from eviction. I have worked many years on the homeless question in Oregon. The number one way that our chronically homeless clients enter the homeless system is through an eviction. Let's not create more homeless today, and spawn another unsheltered, chronically homeless crises a decade from now.

We urge you to protect our vulnerable populations, the elderly living in trailer parks, children who will have nowhere else to go, the disabled who are on fixed incomes, and thousands more across our state who cannot remain housed without favorable action on SB 611.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Jones  
Executive Director