

Submitter: John Knight

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3503

Dear Chair Dexter and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,??

My name is John Harris Knight, and I live in Portland. I write to you all in support of HB 3503. We need local authority for rent stabilization in our communities to mitigate rampantly inflationary rental markets' harmful impacts on Oregonians.?

Oregon currently has statewide rent stabilization measures, but prohibits local governments from implementing their own policies. We need to reverse this ban on local rent control.

?As a renter in Oregon, I have dealt with predatory landlords who have signed tenants up to a lease, then raised rents by 25%. While living in Corvallis, I witnessed my landlord signing up Oregon State University students to leases in September just before the start of fall quarter. In October, he would raise everyone's rents by hundreds of dollars, calling it the annual rental adjustment. When tenants challenged this practice, the landlord would threaten eviction or court for breach of lease. Often these were first undergraduate and foreign graduate students with little familiarity of renter-landlord laws in Oregon and how this landlord used those laws to his advantage.??

We all know the impacts of skyrocketing rents on individuals and families who are already on the edge of housing and overall economic instability, sending more Oregonians into houselessness.

As increasing rents continue to affect earners from above-median to lower incomes, we are seeing additional crises across Oregon.

For some families, urgent need for increased earnings risks pulling workers from the industries we rely upon for goods and services. We are seeing a drain across sectors of capable workers, drawn toward income streams that bring higher returns but produce less of services and resources we expect and need across our communities. As a hospital employee, we have seen the loss of workers, which impacts institutional performance through housekeeping, food service, and nursing (as examples), putting patient care at risk. School districts, such as David Douglas School District, leave special education positions unfilled because potential educators are unable to make ends meet with those earnings. If people cannot afford to live in their rental housing on the income they receive from jobs we rely upon, they will have to find other work and income to support themselves. This creates a risk of brain and skill drain,

destabilizing our communities.??

Wages and income have not increased at the rate of inflation in general, and certainly not at the rate of inflation for rental housing. We must keep Oregonians housed and working if we expect a stable economy that keeps our neighbors safe and secure. Allowing local governments the authority to stabilize rents in their communities through rent control measures to slow inflation will keep Oregonians housed and working.??

Please give our communities the authority to enact rent control. Thank you.??

In Solidarity with Oregon's Renters,??

John Harris Knight