



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

March 31, 2023

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of House Bill 3503, to repeal prohibition on local rent control.**

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am testifying on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49, which together represent over 87,000 people. Local 49 represents private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing, and healthcare workers; while Local 503 represents homecare workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and state and local government employees.

We believe that every Oregonian should be able to afford rent and have access to a place they call home without having to put in jeopardy their ability to pay for food, child care, transportation, health care, taxes, and other necessities. Unfortunately, Oregon has seen a 14.6% rent increase and there have been more than 2,000 eviction filings every month since the expiration of protections, which is a 43% increase over pre-pandemic levels. These rent increases have negatively impacted the homes and lives of our members; many of whom are low-income frontline workers.

At a time when Oregon is experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, we cannot afford to let rent spikes go unchecked. Studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community.

Although Oregon currently has statewide rent control measures, it prohibits local governments from implementing their own policies which would be catered to their own specific needs. We need to reverse this ban on local rent control. Our state is not uniform. Medford is not Portland, nor is it North Plains. We need governments across Oregon to have the freedom to introduce rent control measures that make sense for their community. This is critical in fighting homelessness, keeping our communities strong, and providing basic decency to renters in Oregon. It is critical that rent control be available to local governments so that they can help support their citizens.

SEIU Oregon urges the Committee to vote yes on HB 3503.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos
Political and Government Relations Organizer
SEIU Oregon State Council