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Public Hearing before the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

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Opposition to HB 3526

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

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 3526, which would shorten the amount of notice given to tenants before they need to vacate their home when the landlord is selling the home.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Helping families maintain safe, stable housing is a critical part of our work. Without stable housing, it is difficult or impossible to hold down a job, keep children in school, access neighborhood amenities, and stay healthy. As vacancy rates have plummeted and housing has become less and less affordable across the state, our clients have increasingly struggled to maintain stability for themselves and their children.

In almost every community across the state, Oregon renters are cost-burdened and vacancy rates are extremely low. In fact, Oregon has the [9th highest rents](#) in the nation, and the [4th lowest vacancy rate](#) in the nation. These combined factors have led to Oregon ranking [4th highest in the nation for people per capita experiencing homelessness](#), including [more than 23,000 K-12 students](#).

The issuance of a termination notice due to no fault of the tenant, such as when a landlord decides to sell the property, can have life-altering consequences for the tenant and their family. Even in the best of times such disruption can cause chaos, requiring the sudden need to find alternate suitable housing, incur unexpected moving expenses, come up with first and last-month's rent plus security deposit, and manage changes to work, school, health care, and other important community ties if they are unable to find suitable housing nearby. These consequences are greatly exacerbated during a housing crisis such as ours, when vacancies are low, rents are high, and shelters are full.

Under current law, ORS 90.427(5)(d) requires 90 days' notice prior to termination of a covered tenancy after a landlord has accepted an offer to purchase the home. The current notice provision was created to provide tenants with enough time to have a chance to seek and find alternative housing, as well as save for upcoming expenses they will have to incur as a result of the move. In today's market, even 90 days is often insufficient for families to find solutions in time, and we frequently hear of families doubling up, living in motels, sleeping in their cars, or seeking emergency shelter as a result of sudden displacement.

Reducing the amount of notice provided to households displaced without fault would exacerbate the stress, financial strain, and disruption suffered when facing a forced move, and would increase the risk of homelessness.

For the above reasons, we respectfully oppose this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.