

Submitter: Cynthia LaChester
On Behalf Of: Self - renter
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: SB611

To: House Rules Committee
From: Cynthia LaChester, Oregon Renter
Subject: Yes on SB 611B

I live in Portland and turned 70 this year. Already, my rent eats up all of my social security, except for \$56. In order to afford my recent increases, I've returned to full time work as a janitor on the graveyard shift to make ends meet. A 14.6% rent increase would be completely impossible for me.

I've been in Portland since 2004 and have spent the last decade of my life in this house. When I first moved in, the rent was only \$735 per month but it's gone up \$1,220, alongside the increasing cost of food, gas, and everything else. With inflation, I've been eating only once a day in order to make things stretch. I never imagined I'd still be working at 70 but it's how I'll get by. As long as rent increases continue at such an accelerated speed, I'll be working for the rest of my life—I have no other choice.

I've been homeless before. Thankfully, I had support to get through it but it's tough to live in a vehicle—to figure out where to use the bathroom, where to shower; to survive through rain and snow. I work downtown and see a lot of unhoused people, including families with their kids living out of cars. People are struggling on a day-to-day basis due to conditions that strip us of our humanity, of our dignity.

In Portland, I saw a complex full of elders get evicted in order for the building to be torn down and rebuilt. I don't know what happened to the people living there—they didn't have anywhere else to go. We don't just need new development that'll take years to build, we need protections that keep us in our homes right now. I'm not exaggerating when I say that these rent increases are going to kill us. We can't compromise the lives of everyday Oregonians based on the promise of future development. We need to pass SB 611B.