

**Testimony Submitted by
Hanna Osman, Policy Researcher/Analyst
Oregon Consumer Justice
To the House Committee on Rules**

6/21/2023

Regarding: Support for SB 611B

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Hanna Osman, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of Oregon Consumer Justice today in support of SB 611B.

Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ) is a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization advancing a justice movement that puts people first. We are working to end predatory practices and ensure that bad actors are held accountable so all Oregonians can live with dignity, good health, joy, and economic opportunities. OCJ works across policy, engagement, education, and the law to ensure that financial and business transactions are reliably safe and that all Oregonians know and can exercise their consumer rights.

The rent crisis in Oregon is putting many people at risk of displacement and homelessness. Four in ten Oregonians rent their homes and already pay the ninth-highest rent in the nation (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, 2023). The statewide stories of massive rent increases in communities large and small highlight the urgency of this crisis. Whether these increases are hitting entire buildings, mobile home parks, or individuals, each and every instance puts people at risk of displacement and homelessness.

SB 611B is an action that the legislature can take now to have an immediate impact on our state's housing crisis as we work on long-term solutions to increase supply and provide support to rehouse our currently homeless neighbors.

Senate Bill 611B provides reasonable and necessary rent stabilization for tenants while protecting landlords' and developers' ability to maintain a reasonable profit:

- The bill keeps Oregon's current rent stabilization law intact, with the addition of a 10% cap to protect in cases of extreme inflation.
- The rent stabilization formula will be 7% plus inflation, with a cap of 10%.
- This 10% cap is in keeping with the intent of SB 608 when passed in 2019 when the upper increase contemplated was 10%.

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. A reasonable rent limit will help prevent high-rent home loss and prevent our state's homeless crisis from getting worse just as we are all pulling together to treat it as the emergency that it is.

SB 611B is a reasonable proposal that will prevent extreme rent increases and displacements while allowing landlords to take inflation into account and preserving the ability to reset rents to market rates in between tenancies. New properties continue to be exempt from the law, ensuring there is no impact on new development.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 611B as a critical homelessness prevention strategy to protect seniors, families, individuals, and communities across the state from extreme rent increases and displacement.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to Oregon's communities.