



SO Health-E

Advocating for Health Equity

June 21, 2023

Re: Support for SB 611 to address Oregon’s statewide housing affordability crisis

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

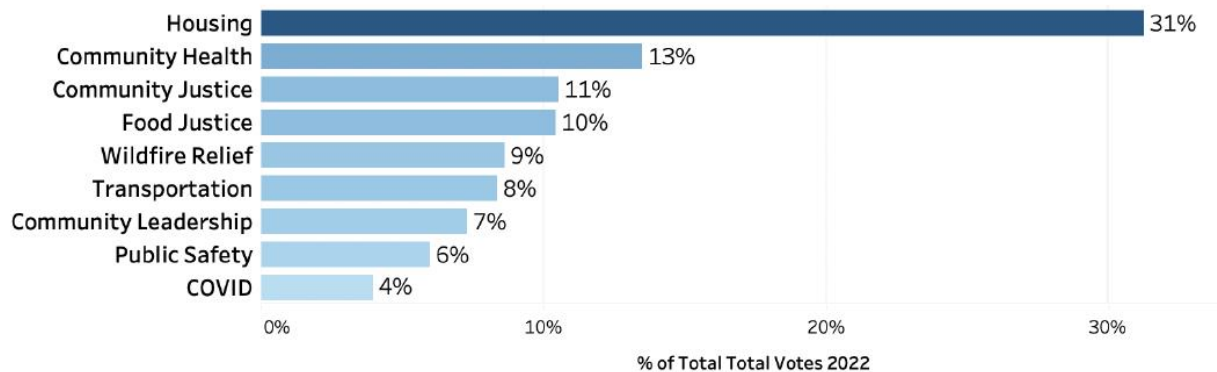
SB 611 is needed now to address the #1 concern for Southern Oregon communities: housing affordability, which is also homelessness prevention. That’s why SO Health-E, the Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition (RHEC) serving Jackson and Josephine Counties urges strong support and swift action to pass Senate Bill 611.

In 2022, SO Health-E did a community priorities survey of residents in Jackson and Josephine Counties, prioritizing the voices of people of color, wildfire survivors, LGBTQ+ people, Spanish speaking households with children, people living with a disability, students, and low-income people.

The #1 issue that community members prioritized was housing. Specifically, we heard a lot about housing affordability and the reality that 14.6% rent increases, as were legal in 2022 for properties 15 or more years old, was too high for anyone to afford, outpacing wages and Social Security. After the Almeda fire, reports of extreme increases are becoming more common in our community. When people have to vacate due to no fault of their own, Oregon’s tight and expensive rental market makes it hard to quickly find a new home.

Total Votes by Category.

Housing was voted by survey participants as their #1 priority.



Families in our region can't wait. The reasonable and urgently needed rent stabilization in this bill is needed now by families and communities in Southern Oregon and across the state. This bill represents a conservative compromise that protects the ability of landlords and developers to continue providing housing at a fair rate of return without continuing the devastating impacts of housing instability and growing senior and family homelessness that results from runaway rent hikes.

Our community has been in a housing crisis for years, which was made worse by wildfires in 2020. We are pleased to see that **SB 611 addresses some of the affordability crisis** that renting Oregon households face.

Please pass SB 611 as swiftly as possible.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Glass". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Glass
Policy and Advocacy Coordinator,
SO Health-E, the Regional Health Equity Coalition serving Jackson and Josephine Counties