

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 611B. My name is Beth and I am a tenant who has lived in rental housing across Clackamas County since my parents lost their home during the Great Recession.

I strongly urge you to pass SB 611B as a critical homelessness prevention strategy for seniors, families, individuals and communities across the state suffering from rent spikes.

My family and I lived on the brink of homelessness multiple times when I was an adolescent. When my single mother faced spikes in rent, us teenagers had to increase our hours at work to ensure we would keep our housing. Many Oregonians live paycheck to paycheck and the current rates of rental spikes are untenable for most renters. As an adult I have lived in poor housing conditions to afford rent. Housing prices continue to rise as wages remain stagnant. The passage of this bill would lessen the burden of these continued rent spikes, and I hope that future legislation will continue to decrease the disproportionate stressors renters face in our state.

Senate Bill 611B provides reasonable and necessary rent stabilization for tenants, while protecting landlords' and developers' ability to maintain a reasonable profit. Lawmakers did the right thing passing SB 608 in 2019. But we are now facing extreme inflation and without SB 611B, the 2023 rate increase is an unreasonable 14.6%. Tens of thousands of renters are at risk of displacement due to these extreme rent increases.

Four in 10 Oregonians rent their homes and they pay the ninth highest rent in the nation. Studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community. Extreme rent increases are happening across the state and the results are playing out in eviction court.

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

Please pass SB 611B as soon as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Beth Walker