

ROGUE ACTION CENTER

March 20th, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

From: Dana Greenblatt, Rogue Action Center

RE: SB 611

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

Thank for the opportunity to submit testimony. Dana Greenblatt and I am a policy advocate at the Rogue Action Center (RAC). We are a community based non-profit working to address economic and social issues in the region and make Southern Oregon a more liveable place for everyone. **I am writing to strongly urge you to pass SB 611 as a critical homelessness prevention strategy to protect seniors, families, individuals and communities across the state from extreme rent increases and displacement.**

In 2017 our organization was founded, in part, to address the rising cost of housing here in Jackson and Josephine County. Since that time, we have seen overlapping crises (COVID 19 and the 2020 Almeda Wildfires) that have exponentially increased the housing shortage in our communities. **Renters in Southern Oregon experienced the rent hikes in 2023 against this already bleak housing landscape. As a result, families and individuals are ending up without secure housing or sacrificing other basic needs, such as food, in order to pay rent.**

We know that the affordable housing crisis that we are experiencing is not unique to Southern Oregon. Four in 10 Oregonians rent their homes and they already pay the ninth highest rent in the nation. Whether these increases are hitting entire buildings or mobile home parks or individuals, each and every one puts people at risk of displacement and homelessness. **The Rogue Action Center fought hard for the passage of SB 608, which provided important protections but also left critical gaps.** Currently, rent increases for properties 15 or more years old can be as high as 14.6%. Additionally, there are no limits at all on rent increases in buildings 15 years or newer. Reports of extreme increases such as 32%, 47%, 50% are becoming more common.

SB 611 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. SB 611 would:

- Limit rent increases to 3% + inflation with maximum increase of 8% during a calendar year.
- Narrow the loophole, applying rent stabilization to buildings older than 3 years, which increases the number of people protected while exempting new construction.
- Increase relocation assistance to three-months' rent to help tenants displaced through no fault of their own avoid homelessness. Landlords with four units or less are exempt from this provision.

Our communities in Southern Oregon as well as renters across the state cannot wait a day longer for the important protections that would be codified by SB 611. Please pass SB 611 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Dana Greenblatt