

Submitter: Betty Holladay

On Behalf Of: Conda Walsh

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

To: Chair of the Senate Housing and Development Committee: Kayse Jama
Vice Chair of the Senate Housing and Development Committee: Dick
Anderson

Re: Support of Senate Bill 611

Good day! My name is Conda Walsh and I am a retired member of SEIU, a former State Employee and a former Legislative employee (1970's – early 1980's). Having been on your side of the desk and knowing the intricate process of introducing and funding bills that help Oregonians/taxpayers/voters, your family/neighbors and mine, has always been critical, but now is a true "EMERGENCY." I am a recently widowed disabled 70 year old woman. My wonderful husband of 22 years and 4 months died January 25, 2023. I am dealing with my grief and yet at the same time struggling to make my rent payments. I live in a manufactured home park. My monthly lot rent just increased from \$751.00 to \$811.00 effective February 1, 2023. The owners of my park reside in California. They have NO clue as to the "real" living situation here, as far as the local economy, the job situation, or even the lack of financial assistance for lower-middle class people like me.

When my husband and I purchased our home in 2014, our park rent was \$630.00 per month. Now that I am widowed, I live on Social Security, and a very small Oregon PERS retirement. My PERS is a net of \$261.04 and my Social Security is \$1,589.00, before taxes, with my monthly income totaling \$1,850.04. The new amount of my park rent is nearly half my monthly income because I can't afford to have the taxes taken from my monthly disability. It would come closer to taking 2/3rd of my income if I had taxes taken out of my disability also. To answer the question "Why do it that way?." it is because when I do my taxes, my deduction as a disabled person and now a widow, will offset the taxes I owe.

I applaud the efforts of this bill to cap rent increases at 8% at a maximum. However, I would like to live out my time in our home. Unless there is some means of limiting the percentage of annual rental increases to even less than 8%, that isn't going to be possible. Personally, I would prefer to have my rent frozen. The landlord has not done much in the way of keeping up the land or providing any free services. If I had to list a figure for a rent cap, it would be 1% less than the calculated CPI for a year.

My monthly expenses for necessary items like the house payment, food, pet food, internet, transportation assistance, utilities, the mandatory home insurance/car

insurance for our park “rules,” as well as medication copays and medical services exceed what I have left. I am not on Medicaid; I can’t afford the \$170.00 per month for Part B plus the copays for my cardiac and diabetic medications. I am and have been working to navigate the “system” for assistance in rent – income too high; food assistance – income too high; services through Senior and Disabled Services - income too high; energy assistance - income too high. Still I, at least up until now, been able to pay my PGE bill, internet etc. I have had wonderful help from Union members in navigating the system, but the waiting lists for some services/help/funding, exceed the budget/grant allocations and the waiting periods are months, if not years long. I am attempting to get onto Oregon Health Plan. I recognize as bad as the situation is that I am in now, there are THOUSANDS of Oregonians in worse shape. I am just grateful I have only 3 furbabies to feed daily. I can’t imagine the stress of trying to feed and safely house a child/children.

I am sincerely and passionately begging you to pass a reasonable limit on the annual rent increases for all of us who are struggling with our finances. Again, I want to live out my time in the home my husband and I bought together. I don’t want to be a burden on “society,” but I also don’t want to be a “cash cow” for an out of state park owner.

Thank you for listening to me.

Conda Walsh
Salem, OR