

Submitter: Joel Colbert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

Dear Oregon State Legislature,

I have owned and managed rental property for nearly 30 years, and my father 30 years before me, just shy of 60 years that I have been directly involved in the rental property business. I have not in all that time, witnessed rent control legislation, anywhere in this country that has produced meaningful results or rectified the issue, rather there is a historic track record that it undermines rental housing stability and further compounds the problem for those it is aimed to help. The current bill, SB 611 is as restrictive and concerning a piece of legislation as I have seen and quite frankly it is disheartening. I worked for 35 years as a probation officer and saved diligently along the way to purchase a rental property. I was then able to acquire additional rental property upon my father's passing. Often landlords are portrayed as greedy and wealthy individuals who are handing out "predatory rent increases" as one recent headline regarding SB 611 suggested. That has certainly not been my experience or my story. I witnessed my mother and father use their rental properties as an avenue to better the lives of others, often keeping rents well below market value when a tenant was in a time of extra need. My wife and I continued in that vein. We once provided housing to folks who were living in their car, offering them a caring "hand-up" and the opportunity to move into a warm apartment with agreed upon conditions. This couple worked diligently to meet the agreement and in time they were able to meet the standard monthly rent which they were proud of. One of them became my wife's caregiver for six years before her passing. They both remain dear to our family and are living in that same home today. With the passage of recent bills such as SB 608 and now SB 611, I no longer would be able to afford or feel protected to take that risk. Furthermore, I can no longer self-manage my properties due to the increasingly cumbersome changes and regulations to the point I had to outsource the management of my properties, thereby adding a layer of cost I did not previously incur. A tangible example of this is the number of landlord/tenant forms which have tripled in the last 5 years alone. Now, with the potential for more restrictive rent control and triple the cost of tenant relocation fees (something that deeply confounds me as to how that is a private property owner's responsibility) in addition to rising inflation for operating costs, property taxes and repairs, I am considering selling my rental properties and getting out of the rental housing business, something I hoped to pass down as a legacy to my children and grandchildren. Oregon Legislature, I urge you to consider with sincerity, the impact the passing of this piece of legislation will have on the rental housing industry, that it will only prove to compound and complicate the existing problems. I know I am not alone as a housing provider contemplating leaving the rental property business altogether and it stands to reason

property developers and investors will reconsider their projects as it would be unattractive to build rental properties in Oregon with the passage of SB 611, thereby further restricting the number of homes available to those in need which is the greatest historical deterrent to unsustainable rent increase and housing instability. We need to do better than SB 611. We must all reach across the aisle and be willing to understand both sides of the equation to properly address the housing concerns we face; SB 611 does not accomplish that.

Sincerely,

Joel Colbert