



March 26, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Housing & Development

From: Oregon Education Association

RE: Support for SB 611

Chair Jama and members of the Senate committee on Housing & Development,

My name is Michele Ruffin, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Oregon Education Association.

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-k to community colleges. Our members are classroom teachers, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, school counselors, community college professionals and more.

On behalf of educators across the state, we would like to urge passage of SB 611.

Everyone in Oregon deserves safe and stable housing but our high rental costs and housing inequities are forcing families out of their homes. While the Oregon housing market provides skyrocketing property wealth for landlords, renters have nothing to fall back on when their monthly costs rise beyond their paychecks. Very few people can afford a 14.6% housing cost increase. Getting an increase that high may as well be an eviction notice for Oregon renters.

Eviction, displacement and homelessness are particularly difficult for young people and students. Oregon already has one of the highest student homelessness rates in the country. About 23,765 Oregon students experienced homelessness or housing instability at some point in 2022. This is unacceptable. These students' circumstances put them at an incredible disadvantage through no fault of their own. We know that without the basic needs being met, students are unable to adequately study, learn, and wholly engage in their education. Students experiencing homelessness are 27% less likely to graduate from high school than housed students.¹

SB 611 is a reasonable approach and though it does not solve all the inequities in our housing market, it's an important step to more housing stability and fairness in this crisis we are facing. Please vote yes on SB 611 to prevent more high-rent homelessness in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin

Government Relations Consultant

Oregon Education Association

¹ <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ACGR-of-Students-Who-Experienced-Homelessness-in-America.pdf>