



March 23, 2023

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee on Housing and Development

Re: Senate Bill 611 – Support, Reasonable Rent Increases

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Creeana Bort, I am a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, and I represent the NAYA Action Fund located in Portland, OR. Founded by the community, for the community, the NAYA Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with a mission to expand political advocacy and build electoral power in partnership with the Native community. The NAYA Action Fund provides tools to shape public policy, cultivate leadership, and elect champions for issues impacting Native people. Our vision of systemic change is youth-centered, family-driven, and elder guided. I write in support of Senate Bill 611.

Over the last few years, we have watched as Portland battles ever-increasing rent prices, a housing market struggle to stay afloat, and more people pushed out of their homes into the streets. As inflation continues to rise, we see more families struggle to afford to live within Portland, making the bare necessities hard to afford. In 2019, we saw the passing of SB 608, which attempted to provide more protections for individuals paying rent. However, we are facing extreme inflation, and 2023 rate increases are now at an unreasonable 14.6%. According to the federal Government Accountability Office, every \$100 increase in community median rent equals a 9% increase in local homelessness. SB 611 is part of the Homeless Prevention Package, requesting to set reasonable and predictable rent increases for Oregonians.

Oregon now has the ninth-highest rent in the nation, and studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community. SB 611 would limit rent increases to 3%+ inflation with a maximum rise of no more than 8% during the calendar year. Rent increases have far outpaced wage and social security increases, which have left families and individuals rent-burdened and in financial distress. Among those most impacted are BIPOC communities, where more than 6 out of 10 renters behind on their payments came from communities of color. A reasonable rent limit will help prevent high-rent home loss and our state's homeless crisis from worsening, just as we are all pulling together to treat it as the emergency that it is.

We must protect seniors, families, individuals, and communities across the state from extreme rent increases and displacement. SB 611 will help protect our next seven generations as we provide security to their housing, allowing them to continue forward in life without the fear of becoming houseless all because they had to choose between paying for a medical visit or rent. On behalf of the NAYA Action Fund, we urge you to support the passing of SB 611 to increase security for tenants through reasonable and transparent rent increases, increases relocation assistance, and limitless rental resets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Creeana Bort". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a white rectangular box.

Creeana Bort



Policy and Advocacy Organizer