

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SB 722, which will help prevent displacement and extreme rent spikes by extending coverage of our state's rent stabilization statutes.

My name is Tania Kuehl, and I am a native Oregonian. This is the short version of my housing story: two and half years ago I finally managed to leave a toxic and abusive relationship. I worked 60-65 hours a week, so I wasn't concerned with finding a new place to live. In hindsight I should have been very concerned. I checked classifieds, marketplace, online rental sites, property management places, called on for rent signs, and more, but what I found was outrageous housing prices, and scams!

I spent every spare moment trying to find somewhere to live. I ended up in a hotel room for a couple months, but summer tourism hit and I could only afford a room once or twice a week, so I could shower. I ended up living in my car with my very old dog. I just couldn't find affordable housing in central Oregon. I live paycheck to paycheck and simply couldn't afford 3x the rent for a deposit plus rent. I looked at renting a room in someone's house, but that wasn't very viable as people are strange, and have strange rules. I made too much money for any assistance, yet my take home would disagree. I ended up living in my car for two years, and still made it to work everyday.

I couldn't do another winter living in my car, so I went back to my abusive ex. And guess what? Four months later my story repeats itself– let me say that again MY STORY REPEATS ITSELF. It's unfathomable that a person can work so hard yet not be able to find affordable housing. If I didn't work I could get help with housing, food, and free health insurance, but I choose to work hard and it gets me nowhere. Oregon has failed me!

SB 722 is the only policy tool on the table this session that would provide immediate and measurable protection for Oregonians like myself suffering due to rent spikes as a result of our state's affordable housing crisis. The bill reduces the current 15 year exemption for new construction from our statewide rent stabilization statute down to 7 years. This change would provide reasonable rent stabilization protection for an additional 40,000 housing units and between 80,000 to 100,000 Oregonians. This proposed change strikes a balance between continuing to encourage new units to come into the market and ensuring that those units do not contribute to long-term gentrification and price inflation.

I urge your strong support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Tania K Kuehl