

3/19/2025

Testimony in support of SB 722

Senate Committee on Housing and Development

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

My name is Sam Guthman, she/her, and I am the Policy Manager and Lead Lobbyist at APANO Communities United Fund 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 and prohibiting the use of price-fixing software to inflate rents.

APANO is a culturally specific organization that serves Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities in Oregon. Our members, many of whom are renters, have long experienced the devastating impacts of housing instability due to rapidly increasing rents, lack of tenant protections, and displacement. Rent stabilization is a critical racial and economic justice issue for our communities. Many AANHPI families already face systemic barriers to homeownership, and when rents spike unpredictably, families are often forced to relocate, disrupting employment, education, and community ties.

SB 722 is the only policy tool on the table this session that would provide immediate and measurable protection for Oregonians 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 strikes a balance between encouraging new housing development and ensuring that newly built units do not contribute to long-term gentrification and displacement.

The bill also amends the Landlord-Tenant Act to prohibit the use of price-fixing AI software to artificially inflate rents. These tools, which have drawn national scrutiny and legal challenges, allow landlords to engage in coordinated rent hikes, worsening Oregon's housing crisis. Price fixing has no place in Oregon, and preventing its use is a necessary step in ensuring fair and transparent housing markets.

Many of APANO's members have shared their struggles with rent increases that push them out of their homes, schools, and workplaces. Housing stability is foundational to racial and economic justice, and SB 722 is a necessary step toward protecting Oregon's renters from unjust price manipulation and displacement.

For all of these reasons, we urge your strong support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Thank you,  
Sam Guthman  
Policy Manager  
APANO