



## **Testimony in Support of SB 608**

Tamarah Cline RN, CNOR

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Chair Fagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 608. My name is Tamarah Cline and I am excited to be here today with the Oregon Nurses Association to help stand up for the renters in our state who are too often manipulated and abused under our laws.

I live in a smaller community in Eastern Oregon where a large percentage of the population is at or below poverty levels with one rental agency managing the vast majority of the rental properties. I've known friends, patients and family members who have just been able to afford a one-bedroom apartment for \$800 to \$1000 a month. When this cost becomes unsustainable and the tenants are forced to move out, the company has been known to raise the rent by \$200 to even \$500 for the next tenant.

Every week I look in the newspaper and see multiple people looking for rentals, but with few affordable and stable options available. At one time, my daughter lived in an apartment/motel in the Pendleton area. These apartments were so old and in disrepair that they should have been condemned years ago -- she had black mold on the walls, holes in the ceiling that leaked into pans, windows that had no seals left, and a lock on her door that did not work. When she complained to the managers, she was threatened to be evicted.

This is why I'm supporting Senate Bill 608. In communities from Portland to Pendleton, affordable and stable housing is an issue that has too long been ignored. I'm tired of seeing patients like my daughter come in because they've been exposed to toxic mold and are now facing a lifetime of asthma. And I'm tired of seeing patients spend 30 days at the hospital simply because they do not have a house to go back to. I see people in my community make the tough choice between food and rent all the time, which ultimately leaves so many in my area to live on the streets.

The lack of affordable and stable housing is truly a statewide issue that has profound effects on the health of Oregonians. I'm here today because my patients can't wait any longer. SB 608 would not only contribute to the health of our communities, but also help honor the humanity of all Oregonians.

I strongly urge your support for SB 608. Thank you.