



To:

Senate Committee on Housing
shous.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

February 3, 2019

Dear Chair Fagan, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Housing Committee:

My name is Jai Singh and I am a Field Organizer at the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon. I identify as South Asian American, have a graduate degree, am single and in my 30s. I currently live in SE Portland, in a one bedroom apartment, just outside of the Jade District, in the Lents Neighborhood. I am currently rent burdened and am paying over half my income on rent each month. In the past 5 years that I have been living in Oregon, I have had to move five times. At each location I was rent burdened and sometimes struggled to pay my rent on the first of every month. I am one paycheck away from being houseless.

Housing instability is not only impacting me, but my immediate neighbors. Just outside my apartment, literally in my front yard, there is a homeless encampment where people are sleeping in tents and under tarps. I have seen people sleeping in their cars and RVs for weeks parked in front of my apartment complex. We need to do something to stabilize and protect these individuals and families from the harsh elements and provide the basic dignity of housing.

As an advocate, and someone who believes housing is a human right, I urge the Senate House Committee to listen to the stories of AAPI renters in Oregon and how we are struggling to keep up with rent increases on a regular basis. We need intervention now to avoid continued displacement and houselessness. Please implement rent control to protect renters from excessive increases in rent. The 7% + Consumer Price Index is not enough for many renters. Several are still being displaced with a rent increase of 9%. We need stronger legislation to address this dire need.

People who rent their homes are depending on the Legislature to act to provide basic protections and stability. We know we need to address a range of issues to solve the housing problems our communities are facing, and it is critical the Legislature act now to pass SB 608. I urge the Senate House Committee to vote yes for SB 608.

Sincerely,
Jai Singh
APANO Field Organizer