



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 608 Senate Committee on Housing

February 4, 2019

Chair Fagan, Vice Chair Girod and Members of the Committee

My name is Peter Hainley and I am Executive Director of CASA of Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 608. This is a bill about fairness and protection for renters in Oregon.

CASA of Oregon's mission is deeply rooted in service to farmworkers and other low-income populations throughout Oregon. We seek to improve the lives of Oregonians by building affordable housing, neighborhood facilities and programs that increase families' financial well-being. We are a nonprofit community development organization that works to support thriving communities by working with local nonprofits, housing authorities and local government.

While constructing and preserving affordable housing is core to our mission, the immediate crises requires action that will stabilize the housing situation for existing and future renters. Under current Oregon law, most renters can be evicted with only 30-60 days' notice. They can be evicted at any time, even if they are current on their rent. A landlord can increase rent at any time after the first year of tenancy, as many times as they want and by any amount, with only 90 days' notice. These laws are contrary to any notion of fairness or justice, lead to fear and displacement and are bad public policy. The current law is clearly tilted in the favor of the landlord.

Statewide just-cause standards have been passed in other states and local jurisdictions across the country. Many of these have some combination of rent stabilization and just cause standards. Oregon needs to do the same.

This bill is a step to right an unjust system. The evidence of the damage that evictions imposes on society are clear. In addition, evictions disproportionately affect people of color who already face incredible disparities due to systemic oppression. SB 608 is a small measure that begins leveling the playing field in tenant/landlord law.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 608.