

3/2/21

Good Morning Chair Faye, Vice-Chair Compose, and members of the committee

My name is Marih Alyn-Claire, a native Portland resident, community organizer, and tenant advocate.

I support HB 2372 Eliminating No-Cause Evictions for the following reasons:

1) Landlords already have a plethora of "for cause" reasons to evict tenants, therefore making the "No Cause" eviction rule totally unnecessary.

2) No Cause Evictions potentially invokes undue hardships and high risks for tenants, especially tenants of lower-income status such as service industry workers, people of color, seniors, immigrants, and disabled populations.

a) Low-income tenants experience additional financial hardships after having incurred thousands of dollars in moving expenses, first and last month's rent, pet fees, and other deposits, plus additional furnishings and supplies costs. The threat of potentially being hit with a "no cause eviction" and facing a forced, back-to-back move for many households would prove financially untenable. These renters can't afford to risk a no-cause eviction.

b) Finding affordable replacement housing (near work, school, transportation, etc.) in a safe neighborhood often takes months to a year or more in a tight high-cost rental market.

For low-income renters who may be able to borrow or scrounge together the funds for an emergency back-to-back move, or who may possess a housing voucher, risk ending up

sleeping in their car, couch surfing, or ending up homeless, because of the scarcity of affordable housing in their price range.

c) No cause evictions can trigger a long-term cycle of housing destabilization for vulnerable renters lasting for years.

2) It can take several years to recoup the high costs of moving and adjusting to a different neighborhood. This is true in my case as a senior. I'm still paying for my 2016 displacement. If I had received a no-cause eviction, I would have been financially and physically incapable of turning around and moving again. It took me 11 months to find my current apartment in a price range that I could afford. A no-cause eviction for me would have caused me to become homeless. (And we weren't in a pandemic environment at that time.) Under pandemic conditions, with even fewer vacancies, and opportunities for rehousing, the risks are even 10 times greater.

3) A no-cause eviction poses a public health threat for tenants, their families, children, and our communities. Under pandemic, low vacancy conditions, tenants have even fewer housing choices. We already have thousands of displaced renters and their families being systemically forced into emergency shelters, tents, and encampments just to survive.

How will our city and state leaders maintain public health and safety with thousands more jobless, evicted renters becoming unhoused and occupying our city streets?

4) Landlords have plenty of opportunities to screen tenants and make an informed decision to rent. Housing as a commodity is not the same as a car rental. Tenants investing in housing and moving in a pandemic cannot risk potentially being forced to turn around and move yet again, putting their household at risk simply because the landlord changed their mind.

Therefore I ask you to support HB 2372. Thank You for hearing my testimony.