

Chair Jama and Members of the committee,

My name is Joshua Caraco. I am a renter and resident of Eugene. I was the first hotline manager for the Springfield Eugene Tenant Association, and am currently training as a crisis counselor at White Bird Clinic. I have a job, some independent wealth, a very cool landlord, and am not behind on rent. I urge support for this bill, as well as extension of the eviction moratorium, and other supports for tenants and landlords alike. Many of my friends and most of the people I serve do not share my good fortune.

Rather than rattle off statistics I would like you to do a thought exercise with me. I want you to put yourselves in the shoes of a young couple, let's say in their 30s. Mom is a server in a restaurant, dad is a musician. Their budget is tight but they make things work. This is before the pandemic. Now dad is out of work completely and mom finally has some hours back but it is nowhere near enough. They are home schooling their child and they let grandma move in to help. Now the neighbor downstairs is complaining to the landlord about the new noise they have to deal with in addition to their own pandemic woes. The struggle is real, it affects all parties. What I want you to ask yourself is: does allowing this young family to join the thousands of people already living in tents under the Washington Jefferson bypass really help any of us?

This is not hyperbole. These are the very real choices you are called to make. When landlord groups (who to be clear do not represent all landlords) argue before you "what we really need is..." they are not bringing us together as they claim to be. Support to housing providers is not precluded by this bill. They are not being asked to be the only ones to bear the weight of the pandemic or even to do so disproportionately. In fact we know already that the poor working class, small business, etc. have already suffered the most. I ask you to act with compassion and integrity.

Thank you,
Joshua Caraco