



The Office of
Representative Wlnsvey E. Campos
Oregon House District 28

TESTIMONY

REGARDING HB 2372: ENDING NO CAUSE EVICTIONS

Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Morgan, and members of committee:

For the record, my name is Wlnsvey Campos, my pronouns are she/her, and I am the State Representative for District 28, which covers Beaverton and Aloha and sits on the traditional lands of the Atfalati, Cowlitz, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and Kalapuya peoples.

I'm here today to testify in support of HB 2372, which would finally end no cause evictions in Oregon.

A wooden box. A shed without running water, and attempts to fall asleep with the sounds of rats squeaking and fighting in the background. These were the circumstances my own father faced as a result of what began with a no cause eviction just over two years ago.

Colleagues, the issue I bring before you today is personal, but my father's story is not unique. In my work as a case manager for families experiencing houselessness, I have seen dozens of families, largely belonging to Oregon's marginalized communities, be disproportionately affected by no cause evictions that often act as a cover for unlawful discrimination or retaliation. But due to lack of required documentation, this is often impossible to prove and are the only two possible defenses available to tenants.

HB 2372 eliminates a landlord's ability to terminate a residential tenancy without cause *and* clarifies damages available to the tenant for landlord's unlawful or fraudulent no-cause notice as: three months' rent; and actual damages sustained by the tenant if the tenant surrenders possession as a direct result of the invalid notice.

Under current law if someone tries to contest their no cause eviction, that eviction then goes on their renter record. The current system leaves renters with the impossible choice between defending themselves and tarnishing their rental history – or having thirty days to completely relocate to a new dwelling. Thirty days is not nearly enough time to find new housing and relocate, particularly for a family. I can tell you from the perspective of a direct service provider, that even families in shelters providing case management and housing navigation often take between 3-6 months to find housing. In a time where a third of Americans have less than \$1,000 in saving, serving households a no-cause eviction perpetuates a system where our low-income

and marginalized Oregonians are burdened with losing their housing, shouldering the large costs associated with searching for shelter, and being put on a fast track to homelessness.

Concerns have been raised regarding the difficulties other state legislatures have had in ending no cause eviction. However, those roadblocks were due to a lack of proper legal framework for what constitutes a just cause eviction. This is not true in Oregon. There is an outlined legal framework for what justifies an eviction. There is nothing standing in our way.

With the passage of SB 608 in the 2019 Legislative Session, no cause evictions were prohibited for tenants who had occupied their dwelling for more than one year. While this was a huge step forward in renter protections, SB 608 still leaves thousands of renters vulnerable to a no cause eviction.

Today, you will hear a number of concerns. Many of those on the end of a no cause eviction will not be heard today. It is painful to share with you the story of the way in which my family was impacted but it is also a privilege that many folks impacted by these issues do not get. It is difficult to sit back and stay quiet on an issue like this, when in my line of work I have watched a mother break down in tears in front of me, frustrated and confused by losing her housing through no fault – no cause – of her own – and then, furthermore, watch her four year old daughter run to her, hold her, and ask her mother to stop crying.

It's past time for no cause evictions to go.

The 2021 legislative session is the right time for this legislation. Particularly during a global pandemic, it is essential that Oregon maintains stable housing for its most vulnerable Oregonians.

Colleagues, I urge you to support HB 2372 and to pass this bill out of committee with a do-pass recommendation. Thank you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wlmsvey E. Campos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Wlmsvey E. Campos