



June 21, 2023

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Hope & Safety Alliance
DBA of Womenspace, Inc.
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 611B. My name is Julie Weismann, and I am the Executive Director of Hope & Safety Alliance, formerly Womenspace.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 611B as a critical homelessness prevention strategy for seniors, families, individuals and communities across the state suffering from rent spikes.

Lane County is seeing significant increases in rent. We are seeing 14% increases at every lease renewal, as well as new usage fees. With the increases, along with gas prices, food costs – inflation, we are trying to help survivors every day just to stay housed, but we are running out of funds too.

Preserving housing stability is essential for all survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Oregon. It is well-documented that housing instability and homelessness increases the risk of experiencing violence and abuse. Survivors who are trying to maintain safety for themselves and their families are often rent-burdened, and one unreasonable rent increase can cause possible homelessness, and vulnerability to abuse.

Senate Bill 611B provides reasonable and necessary rent stabilization for tenants, while protecting landlords' and developers' ability to maintain a reasonable profit. Lawmakers did the right thing passing SB 608 in 2019. But we are now facing extreme inflation and without SB 611B, the 2023 rate increase is an unreasonable 14.6%. Tens of thousands of renters are at risk of displacement due to these extreme rent increases. The risk that this poses to survivors and their children is immense.

Studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community. At a time when Oregon is experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, we cannot afford to let rent spikes go unchecked.

SB 611B is an action that the legislature can take now to have an immediate impact on our state's housing crisis as we also work on the longer term solutions of increasing supply and providing support to rehouse our currently homeless neighbors.

Please pass SB 611B as soon as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Julie Weismann