

February 20, 2023

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of the Committee:

My name is Janie Mogenssen. I am an attorney in Eugene, Oregon, having graduated from the University of Oregon School of Law in 2014. I am a long time Oregon resident. I grew up in Oregon, leaving when I married an Air Force member, and came back in 2009 to finish raising my children. I write to you in support of SB 611, which addresses the critical need for rental stability in our state.

I am proud to be a member of Eugene Tenant's Alliance which is among the many organizations in support of this bill. This proposal will provide much-needed relief to renters who are struggling to make ends meet in the face of rising rents and limited resources. It will limit annual rent increases to 3% plus CPI or 8% whichever is lower, provide protections for all buildings over three years-old, and increase relocation assistance in no-fault evictions.

I believe this bill is a good start. I personally know how difficult it can be to face rent increases, especially when it means having to choose between paying the bills or putting food on the table. I may be a lawyer, but I struggle to make ends meet. I am a sole parent which makes it harder to survive. I lived with my father until my children were grown and I had been practicing law long enough to get somewhat established. When he wanted to have his house back to himself in 2020, I struggled to find a place I could afford on my own. When I moved into my current rental, it was at the top of my budget. Every single year since, my rent has been raised. I have had to choose between paying rent and getting health insurance. I leave my heat off as much in the winter as possible, choosing to sit under blankets in layers of clothing. It is unfathomable to me that landlords can raise rents on their tenants with abandon, only considering how much, not if it is necessary.

When I first moved into my own place, I took a second job working at Catholic Community Services so I could pay off some bills, which has allowed me to meet some of the rental increases. During the past couple of years, I worked in the rental assistance program. I cannot imagine what some of those people must go through when their rent is raised every single year, without compromise, without consideration of the rising costs of other necessities, and often, without warning that it is an automatic yearly expense. I am lucky that I have been able to meet this yearly increase, but many are not. Renters have no bargaining power with their landlords, particularly large conglomerates like Umbrella Properties who have waiting lists for their properties. A renter can move into a unit one year and be priced out of it by the next. The burden of housing insecurity is not limited to just myself, it affects families, seniors, and low-income renters throughout our state. We must act now to ensure that our communities have access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

I urge our legislators to support SB 611, which will provide much-needed relief to renters across our state. Housing is a human right, and it is our responsibility to ensure that all Oregonians have access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

I do not believe this bill goes far enough. I would like to see more protection for renters such as a prohibition on automatic yearly rental increases. Many rental agencies/leasing companies have a provision built into their contracts with homeowners that the company will

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automatically raise rents each year unless the homeowner takes specific action to prevent the increase. It should be mandatory that the homeowner must take specific action to effectuate a rental increase, not the opposite. It should at least be a required disclosure for all landlords who own more than 10-15 units to tenants that their rent will be increased each year. This provides the tenants an opportunity to determine if they will be priced out of their housing by the time they need to renew their lease. These tenants don't have the money to stay, and they don't have the money to move.

I rent from Umbrella Properties. I was warned by neighbors in my complex that this company raises rents every single year without fail. In my experience, in two years my rent has gone up over \$200 per month. If not for my second job, I could not afford these increases, and I cannot afford to pay a deposit and moving expenses. I am not alone. These companies should be limited to raising rents every other year or when there is a demonstrable need to raise rents, and providing much more than a 90 day notice to allow tenants time to prepare if they will need to move.

In conclusion, SB611 is a good start, and I urge our legislators to support it, but I also urge them to consider much stricter and more needed protections for tenants who are priced into homelessness. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Janie Mogensen

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