



Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Todd Addams and I am the interim Executive Director of Basic Rights Oregon, the state's longest-serving LGBTQ2SIA+ advocacy organization. I'm writing to express our support for Senate Bill 611B.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 611B as a critical homelessness prevention strategy, to protect seniors, families, individuals and communities across the state from extreme rent increases and displacement.

LGBTQ2SIA+ Oregonians are more likely to face employment and housing discrimination, meaning even housed folks are often one missed rent payment away from being unhoused. In particular, transgender people are twice as likely to be living in poverty compared to cisgender people, according to the National Center on Transgender Equality.

This problem extends to LGBTQ2SIA+ youth, who are more likely to be in shelters, in the foster care system, and in our unhoused population. Unhoused youth are unable to wholly engage in their education, and are 27% less likely to graduate from high school than housed students.

Four in 10 Oregonians rent their homes and they already pay the ninth highest rent in the nation. The statewide stories of massive rent increases in communities large and small show that we have a rent crisis that must be addressed. Whether these increases are hitting entire buildings or mobile home parks or individuals, each and every one puts people at risk of displacement and homelessness.

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.

Here is the problem we are facing. Under current law 2023 rent increases for properties 15 or more years old can be as high as 14.6%. That is too high for anyone to afford, outpacing wages and Social Security.

Senate Bill 611B provides reasonable and necessary rent stabilization for tenants. 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.



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 a reasonable proposal that will prevent extreme rent increases and displacements, while allowing landlords to take inflation into account and preserving the current law's ability to reset rents to market rates in between tenancies. New properties continue to be exempt from the law, ensuring there is no impact on new development.

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.

The rent increase reports from across Oregon show the great need for SB 611B. 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. A reasonable rent limit will help prevent high-rent home loss and prevent our state's homeless crisis from getting worse just as we are all pulling together to treat it as the emergency that it is. The legislature did the right thing in passing the first rent limit in 2019 but as we have all learned now, the limit did not account for runaway inflation.

We know these extreme rent increases are not isolated incidents. There are so many that the results are playing out in eviction court and in media headlines. More than 86% of all eviction filings are due to unaffordable rent. This reasonable proposal prevents extreme rent increases and displacements, while allowing landlords to take inflation into account and preserving the ability to reset rents to market rates in between tenancies.

Oregon's housing emergency goes beyond lack of supply and the number of people living without homes or shelter. We have a rental emergency as well, with tenants living just one rent increase notice away from displacement and possible homelessness. Without SB 611B to stop runaway and extreme rent increases, we will continue to see people displaced onto the streets more quickly than we can rehouse people. Without passage of SB 611B, Oregon's success in addressing the housing crisis is at grave risk.

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