



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

June 21, 2023

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of Senate Bill 611B, which will protect seniors, families, individuals and communities across the state from extreme rent increases.**

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am testifying on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49, which together represent over 87,000 people. Local 49 represents private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing, and healthcare workers; while Local 503 represents homecare workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and state and local government employees.

We believe that every Oregonian should be able to afford rent and have access to a place they call home without having to put in jeopardy their ability to pay for food, child care, transportation, health care, taxes, and other necessities. Lawmakers did the right thing passing SB 608 in 2019. Unfortunately, Oregon has seen a 14.6% rent increase due to inflation and there have been more than 2,000 eviction filings every month since the expiration of protections, which is a 43% increase over pre-pandemic levels. These rent increases have negatively impacted the homes and lives of our members; many of whom are low-income frontline workers.

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.

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. Studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community. 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.

SEIU Oregon strongly urges the Committee to stand in unity with our members and support SB 611B.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos
Political and Government Relations Organizer
SEIU Oregon State Council