

Submitter: Bianca Riggs

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB2001

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee, My name is Bianca Riggs and I live in Portland. I am an Oregon renter submitting testimony in favor of HB 2001 to help people avoid homelessness and give more people who are living unsheltered the opportunity for safe and stable housing.

I don't believe in dancing around the truth of things, and I don't believe that legislators should prioritize niceness over genuine discussions and accountability. So, from this point on I will speak plainly.

This bill doesn't do nearly enough to help renters like myself. It absolutely SHOULD pass because it does some good, but I question why you people, who are supposed to be our voice, are so unwilling to give us the things that we need to not just survive, but thrive here in this state.

You all seem to have forgotten that people should always take priority over profits. That housing should be accessible to everyone, from those most disadvantaged, to those most secure. Yet, you all seem to be eager to find ways to gut any substantial push for lasting, impactful housing reform. I question how many of you are landlords yourselves, or who benefit financially from having rental properties skyrocket in price, while our ability to pay stagnates at best, and shrinks at worse. I question whether you all would be so undecided on bills such as these if it became a law that you only could earn the state's minimum wage?

The thing that you all never seem to want to admit is that the prices being charged to tenants by landlords are unconscionable. There is no excuse other than corporate and individual greed. As legislators you should be fighting the hardest against our state's homes being flipped for profits by billionaires from other states and countries. It's sick how I can go outside and see beautiful homes being split into four tiny rentals that charge their occupants an abysmally large amount. Homes that are supposed to be for one family being made into tiny dwellings and advertised as being "cozy" "warm" and "affordable". I doubt any of you would find those words to be apt if you had to raise your families in them for the prices they're charging.

And when it comes to fixing the housing crisis I must ask you why you all are willing to allow people to build apartments that are low income and then allow them to raise the rent a couple of years later? How long does it take to get stable from being houseless? Years. It takes years. You want people to go from being houseless, to having some form of housing security, to start healing from the literal trauma of being

houseless, and then you dump them back on the streets by allowing their landlords to raise their rents or by stopping their rental assistance. Make it make sense. If you really think people are supposed to somehow find employment that covers these skyrocketing rental prices then you need to provide us with the information on these jobs that are hiring people with the education and work credentials the majority of houseless folks have.

You may be wondering why I'm talking about all of this when it is not directly discussed in this bill. I'm talking about this because these are the types of thoughts you all SHOULD be having before even creating bills! Housing reform should be bottom up-you should be asking people who are currently housing what they need to get and stay housed. You should be asking the Black women who are experiencing housing instability and racism what they need protections from. You should be asking the disabled people in your state what accessibility needs are not being provided for them in their housing. If any of what I said is something you've not thought of, that is a big red flag and I urge you to listen to it. As legislators I want to believe that you care for ALL the people you represent, not just the people in your income bracket and social circle.