

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sienna Kaske and I live in Portland, Oregon HD 33. I am an Oregon homeowner 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. Growing up, my family had to move frequently due to rent being raised and struggled to access affordable rent. Present-day, I have the deep privilege to be a homeowner and it is not fair that so many of us get to be housed when our neighbors are struggling to find housing because of the ways that the racist & inequitable systems continue to bar folks from accessing affordable housing.

People are living on the edge financially. [According to the state economist, more than 50% of Oregon renters do not have enough money left over](#) for food, medicine, basic necessities. When people on the edge get evicted, it is all too easy to fall into homelessness. Meanwhile, according to tax returns, even during the Pandemic, the number of Oregonians earning more than \$500,000 jumped increased more than 11% in 2020 and nearly tripled over the past decade. COVID-19 caused unemployment that peaked at 14% and left renters without work for long periods of time. While there are no national or local statistics of how many evicted people experience homelessness, surveys in several communities say that between 12-37% of people who have been evicted became homeless at some point, or say eviction was a cause of homelessness. Even at the most conservative estimate, if 12% of the 2,000 eviction cases this month alone experienced homelessness, that increases our current crisis by 240 households statewide.

On average, landlords filed evictions against Black women renters at double the rate of or higher than their white renters in Oregon and in 16 other states, according to the ACLU's Women's Rights Project and Data Analytics team. Communities already facing historical and systemic barriers to jobs, housing, health care, opportunity and wealth are paying an unfair price for Oregon's unfair and rushed eviction laws. Evictions harm babies in the womb and give them disadvantages that last a lifetime. According to a 2021 study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association on evictions of pregnant women in Georgia, eviction during pregnancy, particularly during the second and third trimester, showed an association with lower birth rates and gestational age. These findings suggest that eviction actions during pregnancy are associated with adverse birth outcomes, which have been shown to have lifelong and multigenerational consequences

Evictions and homelessness in St. Johns in particular is a growing concern and we need to make changes now in order to support our neighbors. Evictions create snowball effects of generational poverty and a detriment to the overall well-being of our community. Thank you for hearing this important bill and for considering my testimony. I hope you will listen to people like me and vote yes on HB 2001.

Sienna Kaske