

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

I am an 83 year old widow that moved to Portland, Oregon, in June 2010 from New Jersey, at 70 years of age. I had the chronic health conditions of insulin dependent diabetes, and osteoarthritis—which has caused me significant mobility issues. Because of my health conditions, I took the apartment at Dawson Park Apartments, located 3 block away from Legacy Emanuel Hospital, in North Portland. The rent on this small 1 bedroom apartment in June 2010, was \$575, and this was what I could afford on my fixed income of retirement Social Security. Over the years there were frequent raises in rent.

The rent raises became so high that in 2016, I had to seek work at age 76 if I wanted to remain housed. Until August of 2022 I worked 4 days a week; and only retired then, (at age 82), after arthritis in my right shoulder became so painfully bad I could not even move the mouse on the computer.

In October of 2022, I had to have a double reverse shoulder replacement. During the operation, and the next day, it was found I also have 2 serious heart issues that, combined with my insulin dependent diabetes, and hypertension, mean it is highly unlikely I will ever be able to work again, even though I am capable of living independently.

The current rent on this apartment is \$859, and I struggle to meet that. My income is such that I get just enough income that I am not eligible for any financial assistance. My medical costs are virtually \$1,000 a month, making me basically, “Medically Indigent.” If this new management company demands a rent increase the likelihood is that I will become homeless, at 83, while struggling with diabetes that requires 2 kinds of insulin, (I need to take 4 to 6 shots of insulin--that requires—refrigeration, every day), an expensive blood thinner twice a day for one of my heart problems—and heart surgery is expected soon for the other problem, to prolong my life.) These health costs, coupled with the additional costly medications that I need to take, should make it clear, if I become homeless, I realize that would prove to very likely be a death warrant for me.

Please note: this apartment has a bathroom, combined kitchen and living room; and bedroom without a door, and the 4th wall is open at the top. The apartment only has 2 windows: 1 in the living room, and 1 in the bed room—in other words a very modest apartment.

I am not alone! There are many people who will be affected to the point of “falling into homelessness!” This will raise the monetary costs for every town and city in Oregon. I am wise enough to know I do not have the financial background to quote what those costs will be. And, that does not even begin to speak to the cost in human misery that will develop for each homeless person. But in this I am somewhat of an expert: My position when working as a Mental Health Case Manager in New Jersey for 7 years, was that of helping the Severely and Persistently Mentally Ill individuals, get and keep mental and physical health, and addiction services; and also to assist them in obtaining long term housing.

It would be wise for those of you who will make the financial decisions about giving Oregon’s Landlords greater ability to “Pick the pockets” of the working poor, and people in similar situations, so that landlords can multiply their fortunes at our expense, while worsening the Oregon taxpayers’ burden needlessly, need to give very careful consideration of this matter! I think if you make an unwise decision, you will be very surprised at the amount of public demonstrations that will occur as a result, if you do. And, very probably will result in negative political repercussions, if you choose to worsen the plight of the many people I have named!

The conditions and lack of basic health and safety services in this apartment complex were so bad, we tenants began to reach out to other apartment complexes to learn what their housing situations are. We learned that there were multiple buildings that were being poorly and unsafely managed. In the last year this building’s tenants joined with 4 other apartment buildings managed by IPM in Portland, and have formed a Tenants’ Union, because we were not receiving even the most basic health and safety services that would be a minimum expectation.

It seems that, to reward landlords financially, for establishing a norm of, “whatever they can get away with,” in withholding the provision of even minimal health and safety services for tenants, so to avoid spending any money on humane treatment of tenants “trapped” living in their properties is immoral, and may possibly prove to have been illegal.

A large number of us have become part of the Oregon Tenants’ Collaborative, in order to attempt to establish that basic health and safety services need to become the norm for each tax credit building in Portland, and hopefully throughout the State of Oregon.

Below there is a listing of how poorly this tax credit apartment building has been managed—both historically, and currently:

Dawson Park Apartments was managed in 2010, when I became a tenant, by Income Property Management Co., (IPM), until September 2022, when it was sold to Pinehurst Management, (PM). Dawson Park Apartments was, and is, a targeted tax credit building, that is supposed to be secured by locked entrances—however over the 12+years I have lived here, it intermittently has had lengthy periods of time when the entrances were not secure under IPM management. (In recent years there was a murder across the street; and less than 2 years ago a tenant was attacked and stabbed just outside the building, who managed to get away from his attackers and into the building, then into his apartment where he was later found dead. Various Drug dealers have and may still continue to live in this building periodically, and aggressive homeless individuals have lived in the halls on the top floor, while acting threateningly toward tenants. My apartment is on the ground floor; and the apartment next to mine last year housed a man who was doing criminal activities, and had strangers climbing in and out his windows at all hours of the day and night. The apartment was only vacated when he was murdered in the nearby community.)

Under the new Pinehurst Management company: on 2/22/2023 it snowed, and there was also significant ice conditions as well. Temperatures remained low the next few days, and on 2/27/ 2023 this landlord still had made no effort to clear the handicapped entrance sidewalk of several inches of considerable ice and snow. It was unsafe and a dangerous condition, and remained so. When I reported it to management, on Monday 2/27/2023, (6 days later), I was told there was nothing management was going to do about the unsafe ice and snowy conditions.

The handicapped entrance door has recently become insecure again, and does not fully close every time, now under this new management company, Pinehurst Management, it has been unreliable at least 2 weeks, and counting. The new management, (PM), has admitted they are aware of the rear handicapped entrance not closing securely—remaining ajar; and management has given no indication it is a priority to repair it.

Respectfully submitted: Andrea S. Bradway-Kuske, M.S., CADC, P.W.S.

