

Submitter: Jennifer Gill

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Gill and I live in Beaverton. I am a 6th generation Oregonian. My family were pioneers, ranchers and dry wheat farmers in Eastern Oregon. Now, due to ballooning rent increases and an untenable rental market, it is our turn to be pushed out, kicked out, evicted. To vanish in plain sight along highways, under bridges in tents. My heart breaks at the tragic decline of our city. We must change the road we are on and pass tenant protections like SB 611.

I am a public servant and a teacher on the front line. I am a full-time salaried district employee for the Beaverton School District earning \$40K. I work every single day, have a BA degree from the best college and yet, I can't afford housing. So instead, each year is a new opportunity to become homeless. Each year could be the year I can't make it work. If people like me can't afford housing, what are we doing?

The children and families I serve are on free and reduced lunch. Where will my students go when their parents receive rent a 14.6% rent increase and they're evicted? They are already in crisis. Oregon already has one of the highest student homelessness rates in the country. Almost 24 thousand Oregon students experienced homelessness at some point in 2022. These students' circumstances put them at an incredible disadvantage through no fault of their own. They are unable wholly engage in their education. They are 27% less likely to graduate from high school than housed students. We are in crisis and we need to keep a roof over everyone's head.

While I have a roof over my head at the moment, the owner rented me an illegal, unsafe, and uninhabitable house. Due to these habitability concerns (think vermin, no heat, leaking sewage, the list goes on), I have been on all the homeless shelter waiting lists since August 2022, still waiting. This is the situation so many more will be pushed into if we continue on the path of ballooning rent increases — life on the streets or life in unimaginable circumstances. I can't believe how things are so broken. We MUST pass SB 611 and take one step towards fixing things. For me, my child, our communities, and our state.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Gill of Beaverton