Submitter: Phyllis Shafer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

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

My name is Phyllis Shafer and I am a 77-year-old senior retiree residing in Eugene. I strongly urge passage of SB 611, which addresses the critical need for rental stability including limiting the amount of rent increase to 3% plus CPI or 8 percent whichever is less per year here in Oregon.

The reality of the affordable housing emergency grabbed my attention when the new out-of-state owners of my retirement community, the Eugene Hotel Retirement Center, notified its senior residents that our rent had been increased to 14% in 2023. Historically, the former owners (local citizens of the Eugene community) had increased the rent an average of 3% per year. That means that retired residents, many of whom are on limited or fixed incomes, face an increase in rent from $220 to $330 per month, depending on the size of their apartment. The sudden and sheer increase in rent is generally viewed by our residents as excessive and personably unsustainable in the future. If I face rent increases like this one this year in future years, I will have to look at alternative housing options in the future.

Since November, several senior residents have moved out. Within the past week, four more seniors announced their departure by the end of the month. The prospect of an unstable future is increasingly becoming the "new norm" for retirees residing at the Eugene Hotel. Is that the "Oregon Way" to treat your senior citizens?

There is no denying that the lack of affordable and available housing and the abrupt and disproportionally high financial burden placed on the low or fixed income, young adult and seniors, minorities and other at-need populations constitute an unfair price for unjust laws that destabilize too many lives.

I strongly urge you to pass SB 611 as quickly as possible. Thank you for your consideration and your public service.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Shafer