

Submitter: Donna Brown

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

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

My name is Donna Brown and I am a 91-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 per year or other indexes more appropriate for seniors or the disabled.

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 the apartment. The sudden and sheer increase in rent is generally viewed by our residents as excessive and personally unsustainable in the future. If I face rent increases like the one this year in the future, I will have to look for more affordable housing elsewhere (if it exists)!

Moving is stressful at any age and is doubly stressful for seniors and the disabled. Landlords investing in housing for and care of these populations need to be made aware of their responsibilities in making that investment. Maximizing profit should not be their main objective, as it is in imposing a 14% rent increase. They need to be made aware that when making this investment, there will be limitations imposed by the State which involve the interests and well-being of the residents involved. The idea of "if you don't like it, move" is hardly an option when the only place to move is the street.

Furthermore, any new bill needs some type of commonly recognized framework or guidelines for anticipating future annual rate of increase, other than the CPI. There are other indexes that are more broadly based and include other costs of living for seniors, including rent and medical expenses. Some experts recommending using the CPI-E for figuring rent increases for seniors as it includes medical expenses.

There is no denying that the lack of affordable and available housing and the abrupt and disproportionately high financial burden placed on the low or fixed income, young adult and seniors, women, 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. The sad truth is this: Either you support us now or you support us when we enter the welfare system.

Thank you for your consideration and your public service.

Sincerely,

Donna Brown