

Dear Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

My name is Shannon Shaffer and live in Eugene. I have worked in the rental housing industry for fourteen (14) years. I urge you to vote NO on SB 611.

This bill doesn't make sense. Why would we want to ask housing providers to shoulder any more burden than we have asked of them through the entire pandemic? Have you seen how rent control exacerbates the problem in places like New York City, LA, Seattle, San Francisco, or this little town called Portland? Do we really want to do this to our working Oregonians?

The average Oregonian wants a sustainable way forward, not a quick fix, the legislatures solutions create more bureaucracy and do not solve the root problem; or even begin to fund it.

Rent control muddies the waters by causing a deep financial burden on housing providers, many who are using the rental income to supplement their own or to leave something behind for their families. Again, we are still talking about the average Oregonian who have their "nest egg" invested in ownership of rental units. Now we are going to ask them to take from their lively hoods to pay relocation costs to a renter that may have caused damages, which in these cases most housing providers know they will not recover. How are you going to keep those who abuse the system from bouncing from house to house?

Most Oregonians are wanting a decent, safe, and healthy place to live for everyone. I will agree there are some bad actors in the rental housing industry, although most housing providers work hard to get and retain good tenancies. It doesn't mean that the rental housing provider should be monetarily punished for expressing their property rights or that every renter needs assistance moving. We should be focusing on correcting these bad actors and not putting in more broad legislation in place for the industry.

With this legislation, we are putting the cart before the horse. We need to focus on permanent rent assistance and increasing supply of affordable housing. Do you notice I am not saying conventional housing? We have a substantial amount of hard working Oregonians who are unable to afford housing or there is a lack of supply where they live and work.

Moreover, the governor would like to achieve 36,000 units per year, and I don't know a housing provider that would disagree with adding new units. Although I don't quite follow the rationale of this bill. How are we going to meet the goal if we are disincentive new development and ownership of units by passing rent control and additional assistance for renters to move?

Many housing providers I know are Oregonians and are investing in their state because they love Oregon, no matter how partisan the politics. If we make these changes to our current policy, I imagine the only players large enough to wade through all the bureaucracy are these large out of state corporations; in turn taking money from Oregon's economy.

One of my roles allows me the opportunity to work in affordable housing. I hear every day how people are struggling to find properties because of funding or waitlists. I knew of Section 8 and that it helped Oregonians and I have come to realize how many barriers have been put in place already to help prevent working Oregonians from easy access to affordable housing programs or properties.

Housing providers in the past few years have been faced with rising utility and insurance costs, inflation, increases in maintenance, payroll, local tax and they are forecasted to continue to increase. If you cap the rent increase at 3% it will be good for the renter in the short term, but in the long term the properties can not keep up with inflation and rising costs of skilled labor and materials. My educated guess is there is not enough money to go around, so then deficiencies will begin to pop up or projects deferred.

Oregon relies on businesses to flourish and in turn pay taxes to the state. If we continue to put in regulations like this bill it will affect several industries including medical, manufacturing, and education. We are not going to be able to retain our current businesses if there is no where to house their employees. We can not expand business if there is no where to house their employees. So how do we get there?

I think we take a moment to pause. Have open dialogue with all the players and look to pass legislation that makes sense for Oregon. This bill would muddy the waters to where mom and pop housing providers will exit the industry and many of those homes will be owner occupied clearly creating less available rental housing.

I ask you to vote NO on SB 611. Let's talk about adding units, lets talk about more affordable housing (especially in rural areas), lets talk about the cost of being a housing provider, lets talk about being a renter and only after we have had dialogue should we be setting legislation that will affect all Oregonians. I invite you to speak with me or any other housing provider.