

Testimony against SB 611

Once again, lawmakers have it wrong. The housing crisis is not caused by landlords. While we are encouraged by the holistic approach that Governor Kotek is taking to increasing housing supply, in acknowledgment of the law of supply and demand, still the focus of Democratic legislators remains on increasing costs and restrictions for those whose hard work provides housing to others.

It leaves me persuaded that the whole effort is politically motivated because it has nothing to do with creating real solutions, and if enacted, will hurt the very people you say you want to help – the marginalized, the historically disenfranchised, those needing a second chance. How? They'll find it harder to get into housing in the first place. Screening standards are already getting tighter, and those with marginal incomes, or so-so rental history just won't be approved. We can't afford to take a chance on someone if the costs are too high to easily get them out if things take a bad turn. And, of course, landlords will sell. The exodus began in 2019 when SB 608 was passed and will only continue.

Landlords are not heartless monsters, as much as tenant advocates would have you view us as such. We are by and large, regular people with regular jobs who have built a small portfolio of rental properties and have worked extremely hard to do so. We're people who have great relationships with our residents, who take care of them and appreciate them as valued customers.

My husband and I (who both grew up in poverty) started our rental business 20 years ago so we would have something for our retirement. Twenty years of surviving on one income resulted in exactly \$1000 in an IRA so we took the plunge and it's worked out reasonably well. These misguided laws continue to place barriers in the way of other people like us to build financial stability and create generational wealth. Isn't that what you want for low-income people?

What is the predictable outcome of this legislation? Higher rents, fewer single-family and duplex home options as landlords sell, stricter screening standards, and coming on the heels of the COVID pandemic, potential ruin for many more small-time landlords.

Tia Politi, President
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Owner of four rental units rented by fantastic residents!