Dear Chair Jama and members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

My name is Dean Kelley and I live in Portland Oregon. I write to you in support of SB 611, which addresses the critical need for rental stability in our state.

I am proud to be a member of Oregon Community Alliance of Tenants, which is among the many organizations in support of this bill. This proposal will provide much-needed relief to renters who are struggling to make ends meet in the face of rising rents and limited resources. It will limit annual rent increases to 3% plus CPI or 8% whichever is lower, provide protections for all buildings over three years-old, and increase relocation assistance in no-fault evictions.

I am 76 years old, existing on a fixed income, since having to retire in 2016. In 2020, my apartment complex added a share all the complex utilities that each tenant would pay, on top of our monthly rent. This pushed me into paying some of my payment from my limited savings, It seems I have to exhaust my meager savings for future medical needs to qualify for assistance. The rent increases since I retired have exceeded my financial planning for expenses, especially where rent is concerned.

This proposal is still not enough to stabilize rents. With an 8% annual rent increase, rent still doubles in 9 years. I don't know anyone that can afford that. But SB 611 will still be markedly better than the current law which allowed for unacceptable 14.6% rent increases this year. The burden of housing insecurity caused by skyrocketing rents is not limited to just myself, it affects families, seniors, and low-income renters throughout our state. We must act now to ensure that our communities have access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

In conclusion, I urge our legislators to support SB 611, which will provide much-needed relief to renters across our state. Housing is a human right, and it is our responsibility to ensure that all Oregonians have access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Dean Kelley