

Submitter: Ashley Cervantes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

I'm writing to ask that you prioritize the swift passage of Senate Bill 611. Four in 10 Oregonians rent their homes and are already paying some of the highest rents in the nation.

Keeping rent reasonable impacts me personally.

I have had a lot of experience paying rent, being a renter for my entire life. It's difficult just to find a place that suits your needs while being affordable. My husband and I had found a place that had what we needed and that we could afford, although not comfortably. We've only been living here for less than two years and already are being forced to move due to yearly rent increases. We were lucky last year that our apartment manager was kind enough to only increase the rent as much as we could handle at that time. However, because of her kindness, she was fired (by her own grandfather) and the new management is going to enforce the landlord's wishes and increase the rent by the entire 14.6% he's allowed when our lease renews. This is entirely outside of our capabilities and so have to find somewhere else to live. Unfortunately, most places are becoming too expensive for us to afford, especially with our first baby on the way and my husband still out of work due to wrongful termination. We are very lucky to have family who can help. My father-in-law is converting their garage into a small apartment we can rent from him. It will mean a downsize and less freedom, but it is a blessing to not become homeless, which is a very real reality for many people in our situation and could have easily been for us had we not had people in our lives who could help a substantial amount.

We have never had to face this high of a rent hike before in our lives and it is unrealistic to think the average renter can reasonably afford it. I urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 611, to stop rent increases like these so that families already struggling to survive in this expensive economy don't have to also worry about having a roof over their heads.

Everyone in Oregon deserves safe and stable housing but our high rental costs and housing inequities are forcing families out of their homes. While the Oregon housing market provides skyrocketing property wealth for landlords, renters have nothing to fall back on when their monthly costs rise beyond their paychecks.

Very few people can afford a 14.6% housing cost increase. Getting an increase that high may as well be an eviction notice for Oregon renters.

SB 611 is a reasonable approach. Allowable annual rent increases for current tenants will be more predictable for current tenants and more homes will be protected. And between tenants, landlords can charge whatever the market will bear for vacant units.

SB 611 does not solve all the inequities in our housing market, but it is an important step to more fairness and is an essential element in the legislature's response to the state's housing and homelessness crisis.

Please vote yes on SB 611 to prevent more high-rent homelessness in our communities.

Sincerely,
Ashley Cervantes