

March 27, 2023

Senate Committee on Housing and Development  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Support for SB 611**

Good morning Chair Jama, members of the committee,

My name is Alli Sayre and I'm the elected organizing coordinator for Portland Tenants United, the Portland city-wide tenant union. Through organizing, direct action, coalition building, and civic engagement, Portland Tenants United fights to keep people in their homes, and to achieve dignity and security for all tenants. I'm testifying today in strong **support** of SB 611, which would increase relocation payments, lower the maximum allowable rent increase to 3% + CPI, and reduce the building age loophole from 15 years to 3 years.

This past year I got a maximum allowable rent increase, which for my housemates and me came out to \$250 a month. My landlord told us it's because their property taxes went up. We looked up the increase and it was about \$600 per year. In order to recoup that he would only have needed to raise our rent by \$50 a month. Instead he raised it 5 times that. These are the kinds of situations that would be addressed by this bill. With this bill, landlords will still be able to cover property tax increases.

It's no secret our current laws are not working for tenants. No one is getting 15% raises, so why would we expect them to be able to afford a nearly 15% rent increase? And with the current loophole of buildings newer than 15 years being exempt from rent caps, scores of tenants are not even given that small protection, sometimes getting 50% or greater increases in a single year. The people who own the properties we rent have stable mortgage payments, so why do they need to be able to raise our rent greater than the amount their taxes go up?

Don't forget who is paying those mortgages—we the tenants are. We are the real so-called housing providers. Without our money, landlords would not have the ability to pay their mortgage. So when you consider bills like this, at the end of the day, it's tenants whose voices should matter the most. It's our money at stake here. The right thing to do is restrict the ability of landlords to make huge profits on housing. Both amendment 1 and amendment 2 are absolute garbage and would completely defeat the purpose of this bill. Why do landlords need 10 or 15 years to figure out how much rent to charge? What is the point of going through this if you're only going to lower the rent increase cap by a few percentage points? And giving relocation



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payments are optional—it is optional to no-cause evict a tenant. If a landlord is concerned about paying 3 months' relocation they can simply not evict their tenants. Considering a landlord needs to own at least 4 units to even be on the hook for relocation, I'm not sure who you are protecting here. As Ron Garcia, Jason Miller, and the MFNW ghouls' testimony shows, landlords and their lobbyists will never agree to any reforms. So please, stop trying to appease them by watering these bills down. We, renters, make up the majority of your constituents. Listen to us for once. Frankly, I don't know how you can listen to testimony from tenants impacted by outrageous rent increases and not be motivated to do something real.

Everyone has to live somewhere. Please vote yes to move this bill forward without amendments.

Sincerely,

Alli Sayre  
Portland Tenants United Organizing Committee