



March 27, 2023

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 611.

Given that 4 in 10 Oregonians rent their homes, it is safe to say that many of the nearly 33,000 Oregon workers we represent are renters. No matter the reason for renting - preference or ability to attain home ownership - their housing stability is not only critical for their and their families' wellbeing but is also critical for our communities' wellbeing.

Housing stability is necessary for workforce stability, for children succeeding in school and is a basic need for health and wellbeing for all. Displacement caused by the rent crisis ripples through our communities and puts our overburdened systems under more strain. While I could highlight the many ways AFSCME members see housing instability and homelessness impact their communities and people they serve, I want to share two areas of our membership whose work is directly related to the issue and why the provisions of SB 611 are so important.

AFSCME represents our state's Family Child Care Providers, many who rent their homes. **Limiting rent increases to 3% + inflation with a maximum increase of 8% during a calendar year prevents displacement** of Family Child Care Providers whose homes are also how they earn their income providing community based child care. Family child care providers are often culturally or linguistically specific care and open outside of 7am-6pm on weekdays. Many of these providers care for children whose families are on Employment Related Day Care, the state subsidy program that pays below market rates. Child care providers cannot simply raise rates to make up for increased costs of rent due to many of their families already struggling to cover the costs of child care and who may also face tremendous rent increases. Without the option to increase rates and a shrinking availability of affordable homes that can accommodate their license the child care provider faces loss of home and income.

The incredible rent increases and limited number of affordable homes to rent also strains our overburdened housing support services. The AFSCME members around the state employed by local housing agencies have been responding to an overwhelming amount of requests for assistance to keep people housed and help finding affordable housing. By **providing safeguards such as limiting increases and narrowing the loopholes to include buildings that are older than 3 years, we are able to keep people housed, a far more affordable option than losing a home and having to find a new one.** It reduces the number of people scrambling to apply for assistance and being placed on tremendously long waiting lists for help and affordable housing. As the need grows with too many people from a variety of income



levels, our housing services agencies have a growing number of people whose calls for help cannot be met. People who have incomes that would normally provide them secure housing are now seeking assistance that is rightfully meant for our most vulnerable and in need, but already not enough to help them.

Oregon is already experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in the country and we cannot expect people to be able to stay housed if rent increases are not capped. A reasonable rent limit will help prevent high-rent home loss and prevent our state's homeless crisis from getting worse just as we are all pulling together to treat it as the emergency that it is. The legislature did the right thing in passing the first rent limit in 2019 but as we have all learned now, the limit did not account for runaway inflation.

We need to make this adjustment and provide for the reasonable solutions included in SB 611.

Sincerely,

Eva Rippeteau
Political Coordinator
Oregon AFSCME