

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

I am writing to you today to express my strong support for SB 611, not just as an individual, but as a parent of five children, two of whom have special needs. One of my children has type 1 diabetes, while another has cerebral palsy. We have seen our rent increase by a staggering 50% in the last four years, and as a result, we are being forced to move out of the city.

As a family, we know firsthand the devastating effects of extreme rent increases and the threat of displacement. We have witnessed how it can destabilize families, cause anxiety, and ultimately lead to homelessness. It is for these reasons that I am urging you to pass SB 611 as a critical homelessness prevention strategy to protect seniors, families, individuals, and communities across the state.

Four in 10 Oregonians rent their homes, and we already pay the ninth-highest rent in the nation. As a result, we have a rent crisis that must be addressed, and SB 611 is a crucial step in the right direction. The statewide stories of massive rent increases in communities large and small demonstrate the urgent need for action.

SB 611 is a crucial step in addressing the state's housing crisis. Under current law, rent increases for properties 15 or more years old can be as high as 14.6%, while there are no limits on rent increases in buildings 15 years or newer. Extreme rent increases such as 32%, 47%, and 50% are becoming increasingly common, putting people at risk of displacement and homelessness.

SB 611 would limit rent increases to 3% + inflation with a maximum increase of 8% during a calendar year. This reasonable proposal prevents extreme rent increases and displacements while preserving the ability to reset rents to market rates in between tenancies. Furthermore, it would narrow the loophole, applying rent stabilization to buildings older than three years, which increases the number of people protected while exempting new construction. It would also increase relocation assistance to three months' rent to help tenants displaced through no fault of their own avoid homelessness.

The rent increase reports from across Oregon show the great need for SB 611. Studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community. At a time when Oregon is experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, we cannot afford to let rent spikes go unchecked. 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.

Oregon's housing emergency goes beyond lack of supply and the number of people living without homes or shelter. We have a rental emergency as well, with tenants living just one rent increase notice away from displacement and possible homelessness. Without SB 611 to stop runaway and extreme rent increases, we will continue to see people displaced onto the streets more quickly than we can rehouse people.

As a parent of five children, two of whom have special needs, I urge you to pass SB 611 as soon as possible. This is a critical homelessness prevention strategy that will protect the most vulnerable in our state from extreme rent increases and displacement. Without its passage, the success we've achieved in addressing the housing crisis is at grave risk.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Russell Loewe