

Submitter: Lynda Chick

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3503

Good morning, Representative Dexter and members of the Committee on Housing and Homelessness.

My name is Lynda Chick. I live in Nehalem in Representative Javadi's district. I am a nurse, and I also serve as Vice President of the Nehalem Bay Health District.

I support HB 3503 Lifting the Ban on Local Rent Control.

I have lived and worked in both urban and rural areas in Oregon. Based on these experiences, it is very clear to me that people across our state are rent burdened. However, data illustrate that not every county is affected similarly. In fact, cities within Tillamook County are impacted very differently. The Tillamook County Housing Needs Analysis reported 30% of renters in Bay City are severely rent burdened, while 10% of renters in Wheeler are severely burdened.

Tillamook County has the highest percentage of people living in poverty compared to other areas across the state. Our municipalities need to have the autonomy and flexibility to set rent control levels that are in alignment with these statistics.

Tillamook County has a significantly lower median income when compared to the state -- \$45,601 versus \$56,119 according to the 2019 Housing Needs Analysis. Rent for a two-bedroom home has increased 35% over the last decade, but wages have not increased in step with the rents people are expected to pay.

I support this bill because of the human impact that rent burden has on the most vulnerable in our communities, namely children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs places housing at the most basic level in the same category as food and water, yet we are seeing increased housing insecurity and homelessness affecting our communities, and especially the most vulnerable among us.

As a nurse, I have witnessed time and again, families living in cars or in tents in the woods. According to a 2017-2018 OHA report, Tillamook County had third highest number of K-12 students who experienced homelessness, 72.8 per 1000 enrolled students. This is unconscionable. I have seen our seniors living in trailers without heat or water or in tents behind stores or in church parking lots. In Tillamook County about 30% of the population is 65 and older. The median income of that group was \$34,423 in 2021. The most vulnerable, in terms of housing insecurity, are our friends and family with disabilities.

How will our children, seniors and people with disabilities continue to stay in their homes without rent control measures that consider local income and rent burdens?

This housing crisis needs to be addressed in every way possible, and your support of HB 3503 will provide a powerful way for local governments to help people stay in their homes. Repealing the ban on local rent control would help address these disparities and shocking statistics. And behind every statistic is a friend, a neighbor, or a family member.

It is obvious to me, and I hope it is to you that local governments need the flexibility to address and meet the housing challenges of their residents. By giving local governments the power to address the rent control needs of their constituents, we can begin to address local poverty and give people a fighting chance to do more than meet their basic needs. If our communities are not struggling to stay in their homes, they can turn their attention towards their needs for growth, development, and actualization.

Healthy communities are ones where children have stable housing, where people don't spend more than 30% of their income on housing, where housing costs don't outstrip income and where people can stay in the community of their choice and not be forced out due to high rents.

Please join me in supporting HB 3503 and help lift up my community and other communities across the state.