

Submitter: Tara Schoffstall

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3503

Hello Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Tara Schoffstall, and I live in Johnson City, otherwise known as Johnson Mobile Estates. Thank you for the time to be here today.

I am writing to ask you to support House Bill 3503 so that our cities can work to address housing affordability, as well as limit a landlord's ability to use rent in order to abuse their tenants.

In December 2021, my landlord attempted to evict me over yard decorations like potted plants and stepping stones. The case was dismissed in eviction court with prejudice. My side didn't even have to present, as the judge dismissed it immediately after his lawyer rested.

In the end, he had to pay a lot of money in legal fees, but he didn't have to care. The reason why? He took advantage of the 9.9% rent cap that year, when the previous year he only used 5.4%. He cited "litigation costs" as one of the reasons for the nearly double rent hike.

In a low-income area, that is a significant threat to keep your head low, don't argue back, and just take the abuse.

I live in a manufactured home community where rents are already low. Yet people here on fixed incomes, like seniors, can barely afford rent as it is. My neighbors lose sleep over an increase of even \$60 a month. A 14.6% rent increase will mean the difference between sleeping inside and becoming homeless for my neighbors and me.

I am urging you to limit my landlord's ability to use my money to bully and harass me. If landlords want to waste their profits in court, that money should come from their pockets, and not mine. Our cities need to hear our stories and take action.

Please support House Bill 3503.

Tara Schoffstall