

Submitter: Meg Olson
On Behalf Of: Community Alliance of Tenants and CAT Action
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure: HB3503

Chair Dexter, Vice Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Meg Olson and I currently serve on the Board of Directors at the Community Alliance of Tenants Action. I am here on behalf of CAT Action as well as our C3 Organization, the Community Alliance of Tenants in support of House Bill 3503. CAT has over 6,000 tenant members across the state and works with more tenants through our Renters' Rights Hotline. We are the oldest and only statewide membership organization for tenants in Oregon.

During our focus group research in 2021, we heard that affordability is the number one concern among Oregon tenants. In the last month alone, over a hundred tenants have contacted us about the need for rent stabilization and we continue to hear from tenants on our Renters' Rights Hotline regularly about rent affordability.

I have personally spent the last two months talking to dozens of tenants who have felt the impacts and stress caused by recent rent increases or have been notified of an impending rent increase.

People need stability and predictability to thrive. The current rental market is failing too many Oregonians when it comes to stability and predictability. And it will not get better unless we act.

Tenants across the state are on the verge of being priced out of their housing. Tenants are being forced to choose between paying rent and buying food.

James, from Portland, has gone without heat to pay rent. Kendra, from Lake Oswego, was promised rent assistance that never came. Kathryn is a senior in Salem on a fixed income who will be homeless if she gets a rent increase. Many of our tenants live in Southern Oregon or other wildfire-affected areas that are still recovering from the impact of those disasters.

These people all live in different localities and have different needs.

As an organization, we have and will continue to advocate for statewide policies, but also champion local policies that make sense and add more flexibility to keep Oregonians housed.

We should be empowering local jurisdictions to have every tool in the toolbox to address the homelessness crisis and their residents' housing affordability needs. In

the case of rent stabilization measures, the city can be better situated to determine the impacts on the community, both for renters and for landlords. The needs are different, the community is different, and solutions will be different in every part of the state whether you are in Prescott, Portland, Pendleton, or Port Orford.

We urge you to support House Bill 3503.

Community Alliance of Tenants and CAT Action