

Submitter: Rhea Hannon

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3503

Dear House Committee On Housing and Homelessness,

I am writing on behalf of Sisters of the Road to urge you to adopt House Bill 3503 as a means of keeping Oregonians housed in the midst of an ongoing housing crisis.

According to the 2021 Census American Community Survey, nearly half of Oregon renters are cost-burdened. Of those cost-burdened renters, over fifty percent are severely cost-burdened. As homelessness rates continue to rise across Oregon, rent control is vital in the fight to keep affordable housing affordable and keep Oregonians housed.

While SB 608 protects many renters from outrageous rent increases, it fails to protect newer housing units, leaving many affordable housing units vulnerable to massive rent increases. In 2022, for example, many low-income tenants in Portland saw rent increases of nearly fifty percent. Local governments should have the power to enact rent control that will ease tenant's burdens at any time, not just in the midst of a natural disaster.

ORS 91.225 states that "the imposition of general restrictions on housing rents will disrupt an orderly housing market," but current housing markets across Oregon are far from orderly. Making housing more affordable will make housing markets more orderly by substantially decreasing eviction, homelessness, and their downstream costs such as shelter and voucher programs.

To effectively protect Oregon renters and help slow the spiraling housing crisis, I urge you to adopt House Bill 3503.

Sincerely,
Rhea Hannon
Sisters of the Road