

Submitter: James VanCuren

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3503

Dear Committee Members,

My name is James VanCuren and I am a tenant living in Portland. I am writing in support of House Bill 3503 because our communities need to be able to address housing affordability. I am currently on oxygen awaiting a lung transplant. My rent was at \$550, but last year I got a nearly \$200 increase and then, my rent was increased to \$903 this year. That was too high an increase on a fixed income.

In the past year alone, I've gotten behind on my heat, I've had to forgo medical treatment, and my family doesn't eat anything we can't buy with food stamps. We don't take my kids out to the park because we can't afford the gas. We used to go camping with my kids every summer. We can't do that anymore. We have cut back on all recreational activities so that we can stay housed.

Rent should not be increased at a time when gas and food are also more expensive. It's passing along a burden to renters at the worst possible time. My landlord is not in a financial crisis, his properties are paid off, but still, my rent gets raised only for profit.

When you need to make 3x the rent just to get into a unit, an increase in rent is a big deal. When you are on a fixed income, a 14.6% increase in rent can mean the difference between working two jobs and working three, as my mother does just to afford her rent.

Our communities need to address the problems we are facing in housing affordability. All the new properties in the world won't matter if there is more housing if it's all empty because no one can afford to occupy it. If you want to solve homelessness, this is where it starts.

Thank you for your time.