

Submitter: Alix Sanchez
On Behalf Of: YWCA of Greater Portland
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2305

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Anderson and Breese-Iverson, and Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to HB 2305, the three-strikes bill, before the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness.

I am the Executive Director of the YWCA of Greater Portland. Established in 1901, our organization focuses on services to domestic and sexual violence survivors, incarcerated parents, and seniors through a robust range of services and supports including advocacy, case management, rapid rehousing, parenting and re-entry support, and our Communities of Restoration and Healing (CoHR) which operates 5 democratically-run houses with 34 units where Survivors and their families can heal from trauma and rebuild residency in community.

With nearly 20 years working with vulnerable communities in Oregon, I have deep concern that this bill will unduly impact disabled tenants, tenants from marginalized communities, tenants experiencing financial hardship, and domestic violence survivors. These groups are already over-policed by landlords, and establishing stable housing is a challenge for these groups. It is important to know that nearly 90% of domestic violence survivors experience financial abuse in their relationships, which can impact their rental history and result in multiple eviction notices that are outside of the survivor's control. Any eviction on a survivor's record makes it exponentially harder to find stable housing, which can often lead to survivors staying in unsafe relationships or living situations to avoid becoming homeless.

This bill will also make it easier for landlords to evict tenants for minor infractions. Although this is not the specific goal of the Bill's proponents, its overly broad nature will make it easy for bad actors to abuse it. We have directly seen the impact of this type of landlord behavior on our participants, especially as COVID-era renter protections have lapsed. Domestic violence survivors are often over-policed by landlords even after leaving abusive relationships, and many survivors have unfortunately lost their housing due to this pattern of behavior.

I sincerely urge you to protect Oregon's most vulnerable tenants by voting against HB 2305. You can aid those of us on the front lines of Oregon's housing crisis by focusing efforts on legislation that will make housing more available and more equitable for these groups.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony and for your service to our communities.

Sincerely,

Alix Sanchez
Executive Director, YWCA of Greater Portland