

Submitter: NC Vannewkirk

On Behalf Of:

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 a current renting tenant and have experienced the discrepancies that accompany tenant-landlord power dynamics that have led to violations, or "strikes," whereunder this bill my landlord would have grounds to evict me. My monthly rent was raised this past August and I was under the impression that my autopay would update to my new rent amount, but it did not and thus I underpaid four months of rent without realizing. My landlord did not alert me to this until much later. We agreed it was a misunderstanding, I paid the balance and late fee, and it was resolved. Under HB 2305, this would be considered one strike. Then, my car was wrongfully towed due to miscommunication between the assistant property manager and the corporate managers. The landlord repaid me for the towing fee, but has not admitted fault outright in writing. Under HB 2305, this could be considered the second strike. Recently, my car was flagged by my assistant property manager for expired registration tags and I was notified of a "strike violation" without warning to renew my tags prior to receiving a "strike." Under HB 2305, this would be considered the third and final strike, thus giving my landlord the legal grounds to evict me with a 30 day notice with no right to cure. Prior to these miscommunications, I have been a model tenant for three years and have never been late on a rent payment.

Considering the arbitrary nature of individual landlords' power to determine material violations, this bill provides my landlord with the unchecked power to give me a "strike" for things they have no documented evidence for. Under my lease, my landlord may give me a material violations "strike" for any of the following:

Loud music

Failing to pick up pet waste

Smoking inside of apartment or closer than 25 feet of the building

Marijuana use on any part of the property

Keeping a car on the property without moving it for 14 days or more, including in paid parking spaces

Expired car registration tags

I am LGBTQ+ identifying, disabled, historically low-income, assigned female at birth,

and a young renter, which makes me particularly vulnerable to the potential misuse of landlords' power if HB 2305 was to be passed. I was also houseless and a ward of the court for most of my youth, ages 14 to 20. It is enormous for me to have an apartment and would be devastating to receive a 30 day eviction notice due to minor, arbitrary, and unproven infractions. Due to my background, I would have no resources to acquire new housing in 30 days.

While deciding your vote on HB 2305, please consider this:

I am a tenant who has pulled myself out of houselessness and generational poverty. I now have a college degree, a well-paying job, and an apartment. I have been a model tenant and have never been deliberately late on a rent payment. In the last six months, there have been multiple miscommunications with my landlord which, under HB 2305, they would have grounds to evict me in 30 days. If I was to receive this eviction notice, I would be forced back into houselessness with no way out.

I need you to understand that everything I have spent my life working for would fall away in 30 days due to minor miscommunications. I sincerely urge you to protect Oregon's most vulnerable tenants by voting against HB 2305.

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

Sincerely,  
Current Tenant