



HOUSING SENIORS | CREATING HOPE | PILOTING CHANGE

March 5, 2025

Senator Khanh Pham
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 31 and SB 32

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony, on behalf of Northwest Pilot Project, in support of SB 31 and SB 32 which provide important protections for tenants of affordable housing at risk of converting to market-rate housing to advance housing stability and avoid homelessness.

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to low and very low-income older adults, age 55 and over, experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County. As a service provider for older adults, who are the fastest growing age segment of the population experiencing homelessness,¹ we know that there is a direct link between rental cost burdens for low-income seniors and their risk of homelessness. With more than half of all older adult renter households being cost burdened (paying more than 30% of their rent),² any increase in the cost of rent places an unbearable strain on households that are already struggling. The threat of displacement due to rent increases only exacerbates the risk of further homelessness and prolonged housing instability for low-income seniors.

Over the next 10 years, the affordability restrictions on 7,500 units of affordable rental housing will expire, threatening the security of countless seniors on fixed incomes who will have few other housing options affordable to them in Oregon's private rental market. The reality is that we will not be

¹ Homelessness Among Older Adults: An Emerging Crisis (Generations Journal, Summer 2020), Dr. Margot Kushel, American Society on Aging. <https://generations.asaging.org/homelessness-older-adults-poverty-health>

² Issue Brief: Low-Income Older Adults Face Unaffordable Rents, Driving Housing Instability and Homelessness (February 2021), Justice In Aging. <https://justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Older-Adults-Rental-Housing-Burdens.pdf>

able to preserve all of these units, and thus, it is imperative that we take proactive steps to ensure that these tenants are not displaced or subjected to untenable rent increases.

SB 31 creates a fund to mitigate the impacts of expiring affordability for tenants. These funds can be used flexibly to meet each household's own circumstances. Eligible uses include: helping offset the higher, market-rate rents at a tenant's current property; moving expenses; rental application fees; security deposit and first/last month's rent for a new home.

SB 32 will improve public knowledge of this looming crisis by improving the OHCS preservation dashboard. The data that will be publicly reported will help legislators respond to the problem of expiring affordable housing, and will support the efforts of affordable housing providers that seek to purchase expiring properties in order to keep them affordable.

We urge you to take immediate action to protect these tenants and pass SB 31 and SB 32. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of these bills.

Sincerely,

Yoni Kahn
Advocacy Director
Northwest Pilot Project