

Submitter: Rob Cochran

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB722

Re: Support for SB 722

Chair Pham, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rob Cochran, and I am a Tenant Education & Support Coordinator at the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT). CAT is a grassroots, tenant-led organization committed to educating, supporting, and advocating for tenants throughout Oregon. Our mission is to empower renters to advocate for safe, stable, and affordable housing, ensuring all Oregonians can live with dignity and stability in their communities.

SB 722 is critical to our mission as it provides vital protections for renters who are disproportionately vulnerable to exploitation through the misuse of advanced technology. I strongly believe in and advocate for AI's transformative potential in numerous sectors of society; however, deploying AI-driven price-fixing software to inflate rents and maximize profits at the expense of vulnerable tenants directly undermines our shared values of dignity, safety, and affordable housing for all.

As someone dedicated to tenant education and support, I regularly witness the impact housing instability has on the lives of everyday Oregonians. Reducing the exemption period from 15 years to 7 years under SB 722 is essential to stabilizing rents and protecting communities from displacement and gentrification pressures that disproportionately harm low-income families, seniors, and working-class residents. This balanced approach will help ensure that housing remains affordable and accessible without discouraging new development.

Moreover, prohibiting the use of rent-setting software based on non-public competitor data will prevent unfair market manipulation. AI should enhance human well-being, not amplify inequities or exploit those already struggling to secure stable housing.

I urge you to take seriously your responsibility as lawmakers to prioritize everyday working Oregonians over corporate profits. Your support for SB 722 will clearly demonstrate your commitment to the health and economic stability of our communities over the financial interests of powerful landlords and property management corporations.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for your dedicated service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Rob Cochran
Tenant Education & Support Coordinator
Community Alliance of Tenants