

Submitter: Reed Johnson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB722

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson and members of the committee, My name is Reed Johnson, I'm a graduate student at Portland State University and a renter with three housemates in Southeast Portland. I am supporting SB 722 because it is a lifeline to all renters in Portland who are struggling to balance rental payments with other essential services. I personally have savings that allow me currently to balance reduced working hours with my graduate school studies, I however know many students who study with me who are in debt and/or contemplating leaving school because they are unable to make monthly rent payments. SB 722 quite simply keeps rents in the realm of affordability for us, and importantly caps rents from spiking. Uncertainty about what we will pay in the future, and anxiety about the whims of landlords who may not have our best interests in mind is a reality for many people I know in Portland. While I and my roommates are on good terms with our landlords, this is unfortunately not the reality for everyone. The reality is, we cannot rely upon the grace of landlords to establish reasonable rents. As we know, some landlords are using AI software to set rental rates. SB 722 removes the possibility of these unethical practices perpetuating and it establishes a reasonable inflation rate to rents. In my book, that's a win-win for renters and landlords alike, and should unconditionally receive the support of the Oregon legislature. While I have spoken to the Portland context, these practices described here affect Oregonians statewide. We know that a disproportionate amount of renters in the state are cost-burdened. This is a crisis to be addressed with real intervention and real solutions. One key intervention, one key solution is the actions presented in SB 722. Please consider this piece of legislation on behalf of myself, your constituents, renters statewide, and a future that's affordable not just to us, but to our children who will increasingly rely on rental housing.