

March 18th, 2025
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 722

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

My name is Ruth Woolley, and I am writing in strong support of SB 722 and SB 611 to advocate for rent stabilization and stronger tenant protections. Rent increases and unfair landlord practices are forcing many Oregonians into financial hardship, displacement, and housing insecurity.

Over the past three and a half years, my rent increased from \$877 to \$1,485—a significant jump that made it increasingly difficult to afford basic living expenses. Renters across Oregon are experiencing similar challenges, with housing costs outpacing income growth and forcing many to relocate or struggle to stay housed.

In addition to rising rents, I have faced unfair treatment from property management. In my previous apartment, I was wrongly blamed for flooring damage caused by faulty installation, leading to a \$4,600 repair bill. Management expected me to pay half the cost, despite the issue being their responsibility. Unable to resolve the situation, I was forced to find a new rental, further highlighting the power imbalance between tenants and landlords.

Access to legal assistance is another major issue. Even though I do not qualify for Legal Aid due to my income, I was unable to receive help because of the overwhelming demand for landlord-tenant legal services. Many renters who are willing to pay for assistance still cannot access it, leaving them vulnerable to unfair practices. Without strong enforcement mechanisms and accessible legal support, tenant rights remain difficult to uphold.

This is why SB 722 and SB 611 are crucial. SB 722 will extend rent stabilization protections by reducing the exemption for new construction from 15 years to 7 years, ensuring more tenants are protected from excessive rent hikes. The bill also prohibits the use of price-fixing AI software, which landlords use to artificially inflate rents and maximize profits at tenants' expense. SB 611 strengthens rent limits, ensuring that housing remains affordable and predictable for renters across Oregon.

I urge lawmakers to pass these bills to protect tenants from excessive rent increases and strengthen enforcement of tenant rights. We need a system that ensures fair housing conditions, reasonable rent limits, and accessible legal support for all renters.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to protecting Oregon renters.

Sincerely,

Ruth Woolley