

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 Rebecca Smith, and I am writing in strong support of SB 722 and SB 611 to advocate for rent caps and stronger tenant protections. As a low-income renter, I have experienced repeated rent increases that make it increasingly difficult to afford my home. When I first moved in, my rent was \$400 lower than it is now, yet my income has not increased at the same rate. These yearly hikes are not based on my income but on rising neighborhood values, pushing renters like me closer to displacement.

In addition to financial challenges, I have also faced housing discrimination. My concerns about smoking in my non-smoking apartment, as well as unauthorized tenants in the building, were repeatedly ignored by property management. As a Black woman, I have felt dismissed and had to escalate my concerns to outside organizations before any action was taken. Tenants should not have to fight so hard to have basic housing policies enforced.

A rent cap would provide the stability that tenants like me need. SB 722 will help prevent excessive rent hikes by reducing the new construction exemption from 15 years to 7 years, extending rent stabilization protections to thousands of additional renters. This bill also prohibits price-fixing AI software, which landlords use to artificially inflate rents, making housing even more unaffordable. SB 611 further strengthens tenant protections by ensuring that landlords cannot impose drastic rent increases that push families out of their homes.

Without these measures, landlords will continue to raise rents unchecked, forcing more renters into housing insecurity. I urge lawmakers to prioritize policies that protect tenants from unjust rent hikes and ensure safe, fair, and affordable housing for all.

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

Sincerely,
Rebecca Smith