

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 Deborah Olson, and I am writing in strong support of SB 722 and SB 611 to address the rent hikes and loopholes that are unfairly impacting low-income and Section 8 tenants like myself.

I am a 68-year-old disabled woman living in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) housing at Gresham Station Apartments (55 and Older). Despite having a Section 8 voucher, I have faced extreme rent increases that far exceed what is fair or sustainable for tenants on fixed incomes.

On March 1, 2024, my rent was raised by \$212. Home Forward covered only \$24 of that increase, leaving me to pay \$188 out of pocket. Now, I have received another rent increase notice—taped to my door on November 27, 2024—for an additional \$333, set to take effect on March 1, 2025. That is a total increase of \$545 in just two years! My Social Security income is \$955 per month, yet with these rent hikes, my rent will be \$673 per month—nearly 70% of my fixed income.

This is not just happening to me. Other Section 8 tenants in my building are experiencing similar increases:

- Renter 1: \$511 increase
- Renter 2: \$385 increase
- Renter 3: \$406 increase
- Renter 4: \$179 increase
- Renter 5 (Me): \$333 increase
- Renter 6: \$500 increase

All of these tenants have Section 8 vouchers, yet Home Forward covered all of the increases except for mine and one other tenant who is paying an additional \$5. The disparity in these adjustments raises serious concerns about fairness and potential source-of-income discrimination under Fair Housing laws.

These rent hikes are not about fair market adjustments—they are about corporate greed. When Home Forward raises rent caps, landlords exploit the opportunity to charge the maximum allowed, pushing the poorest and most vulnerable tenants to the brink of displacement. Additionally, Section 8 tenants in our building are effectively being forced to pay for the damages from a pipe burst and flooding that impacted multiple units on December 23, 2022.

This is why I urge lawmakers to close these loopholes and pass SB 722 and SB 611. These bills would ensure that rent increases remain fair and reasonable, preventing landlords from exploiting voucher holders while disproportionately raising rents on the lowest-income tenants.

Oregon cannot continue allowing landlords to profit off low-income renters by pushing them deeper into poverty. We need real protections that prevent these excessive rent hikes and hold landlords accountable.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to protecting renters like me.

Sincerely,

Deborah Olson

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