

March 18, 2025

TO: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

FROM: Grace Fortson, Our Children Oregon

SUBJECT: Support for SB 722

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

My name is Grace Fortson, I am the Policy and Advocacy Manager with Our Children Oregon (OCO). OCO is a statewide nonprofit committed to whole child wellbeing through the Children's Agenda- a comprehensive legislative agenda created and supported by our over 135 member organizations across the state.

I am writing in strong support of SB 722, a bill prioritized in this session's Children's Agenda, which will help prevent displacement and extreme rent spikes by extending coverage of our state's rent stabilization statutes, and prohibiting the use of price-fixing software to inflate rents. **We strongly oppose the dash 1 amendments to this bill.**

To give some context for the economic reality of Oregon's children, I'd like to look at some state-level numbers. According to the most recent data available for Oregon, 13.8% of children are in poverty, 17.3% of children experience food insecurity, 50.5% of renting families experience rental cost burden<sup>1</sup>. This means that a large percentage of children in this state are currently facing one or more forms of insecurity due to economic reasons beyond their control.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

The bill reduces the current 15 year exemption for new construction from our statewide rent stabilization statute down to 7 years. This change would provide reasonable rent stabilization protection for an additional 40,000 housing units and between 80,000 to 100,000 Oregonians. This proposed change strikes a balance between continuing to encourage new units to come into the market and ensuring that those units do not contribute to long-term gentrification and price inflation.

The bill also amends the Landlord-Tenant Act to prohibit the use of price-fixing AI software to artificially inflate rents. These kinds of products are the subject of national attention and concern, and Oregon has joined a federal lawsuit against this practice. Many local jurisdictions are taking steps to curtail this practice. Price fixing has no place in Oregon, and we cannot afford to allow this practice to exacerbate our housing crisis.

Ultimately, unstable housing means more than just a move for our children. In Oregon, housing instability is linked to poor physical and mental health outcomes. Additionally, students navigating housing instability have 10% lower rates of attendance. When lower attendance rates combine with high school mobility, we see declining educational outcomes for youth<sup>2</sup>. Ensuring housing stability is not only a moral imperative, it's foundational to supporting Oregon's future. **For all of these reasons, we urge your strong support of SB 722 and opposition to the dash 1 ammendments.**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/StudentSuccess/Documents/SNHIREsearchBrief1.pdf>

Thank you,

Grace Fortson, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Our Children Oregon

View the [2025 Children's Agenda](#)