



HOUSING SENIORS | CREATING HOPE | PILOTING CHANGE

March 27, 2025

Senator Khanh Pham, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 722 (oppose -1 Amendment)

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

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony, on behalf of Northwest Pilot Project, in strong support of SB 722 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 oppose the -1 Amendment which removes the rent stabilization portion from the bill.

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to low and very low-income older adults, age 55 and over, experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County.

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, every \$100 increase in community median rent equals a 9% increase in local homelessness.¹ In Oregon, high-rent displacement is reaching a crisis level: more than 87% of court evictions are for non-payment of rent.² At a time when Oregon is experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation – and seniors age 65 and older are the fastest growing age group of people experiencing homelessness³ – we cannot afford to let unreasonable rent increases go unchecked.

SB 722 will help mitigate homelessness caused by significant rent increases, and protect against displacement by:

¹ "How COVID-19 Could Aggravate the Homelessness Crisis?," U.S. Government Accountability Office, August 2020. <https://www.gao.gov/blog/how-covid-19-could-aggravate-homelessness-crisis>

² "Statewide Eviction Landscape," Oregon Law Center, February 2025.
<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/289200>.

³ The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness (2019), Dennis Culhane, PhD et al.
<https://aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Emerging-Crisis-of-Aged-Homelessness.pdf>

- Reducing the current 15 year exemption for new construction from our statewide rent stabilization statute down to 7 years; and
- Amending the Landlord-Tenant Act to prohibit the use of price-fixing AI software to artificially inflate rents.

Extending coverage of our state's rent stabilization statutes would provide 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. Additionally, price-fixing AI software is the subject of national attention and concern, and Oregon has joined a federal lawsuit against this practice.⁴ Many local jurisdictions are taking steps to curtail this harmful practice. Price fixing has no place in Oregon, and we cannot afford to allow this practice to exacerbate our housing crisis.

SB 722 is an action that the legislature can take now to have an immediate impact on our state's housing crisis, as we also work on the longer term solutions of increasing supply and providing support to rehouse our currently homeless neighbors. **We strongly urge you to support SB 722 and oppose the -1 Amendment.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Yoni Kahn
Advocacy Director
Northwest Pilot Project

⁴ Jennifer Ludden, "DOJ accuses real estate software company of helping landlords collude to raise rents," NPR, August 23, 2024. <https://www.npr.org/2024/08/23/nx-s1-5087586/realpage-rent-lawsuit-doj-real-estate-software-landlords-justice-department-price-fixing>