

Testimony in Support of Rent Stabilization & Anti-A.I. Price Fixing (SB 722)

Jules Allison

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

My name is Jules and I live in the Cully neighborhood of Portland. As a healthcare provider serving Medicaid recipients, I see firsthand how housing instability affects mental well-being. My clients—many of whom are already navigating trauma, disability, and financial hardship—struggle with the anxiety of sudden rent increases. I've experienced this uncertainty myself when an unexpected rent hike forced me to make impossible financial choices. Oregon's current rent cap only protects buildings older than 15 years, leaving too many vulnerable to displacement. Expanding protections to buildings older than 7 years would provide much-needed stability for those who need it most. Housing security is healthcare, and we must do more to protect renters from sudden upheaval.

As a mental health provider serving Medicaid recipients, I work with clients whose mental health is deeply impacted by housing instability. I've had sessions where someone is in crisis—not because of their diagnosis, but because they're about to lose their home due to a sudden rent hike. It's nearly impossible to focus on healing when you don't know where you'll sleep next month. Oregon's current rent cap leaves too many renters vulnerable, forcing them into survival mode instead of recovery. Expanding protections to buildings older than 7 years would give my clients the stability they need to focus on their health instead of constantly searching for a place to live.

The solution is expanding rent stabilization protections to buildings older than 7 years, rather than the current 15-year threshold. Stable housing is a basic necessity—without it, people can't focus on their health, work, or families. In my work as a mental health provider for Medicaid recipients, I see how sudden rent increases force people into impossible choices, disrupting care and worsening mental health.

SB 722 would close this gap by ensuring that more renters—especially those in newer,

more vulnerable housing—are protected from extreme rent hikes. By lowering the threshold to 7 years, this bill would provide stability for thousands of people who need it most, preventing unnecessary displacement and giving families, workers, and vulnerable Oregonians a fair chance to stay in their homes.

I urge our legislators to:

- Support SB 722: This bill aims to prohibit landlords from using certain software to set rents or occupancy rates and reduces the exemption period for new dwelling units from rent increase caps from 15 to 7 years.
- Ensure Fair Rent Practices: By eliminating the use of algorithmic pricing tools that rely on nonpublic competitor data, we can prevent anti-competitive behavior that drives up rental prices beyond their market value.
- Close Loopholes: Reducing the exemption period for new units ensures that more renters are protected under rent stabilization laws, addressing gaps that currently leave many vulnerable.

Implementing these measures is not just a matter of policy but a commitment to the health and stability of our communities. Stable housing is foundational to mental health, and by supporting SB 722, we take a crucial step toward ensuring that all Oregonians have the security they need to thrive.