

Submitter: Michelle Auster
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB722

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson and members of the committee,

My name is Michelle Auster and I am a recent transplant to Oregon, representing myself, and I am writing in support of SB 722.

I moved here for graduate school. Before deciding on coming here, I was close to choosing to stay in a different city which had been my home for 15 years. A big part of my reason for leaving was the more affordable rent in Portland. Knowing I would be cutting my income by more than half and taking on student loans to attend school, finding an affordable place to live was a primary concern. The search for an apartment was demoralizing and discouraging, as unit after unit used software to steadily increase their prices after my initial inquiries - and that's not to mention the hundreds of dollars extra in junk fees. Corporate algorithmic price-setting is a self-reinforcing, endless inflation tactic. I was lucky enough to find a place that was within my range of affordability, but the reality of living paycheck to paycheck with exponentially increasing debt haunts me as I am fully aware that high rents, rent increases, and housing cost burdens are a direct cause of homelessness.

I moved here with the intention of giving back, of becoming a public servant and working to create meaningful change for the community that welcomed and educated me. To be diving into housing matters in my studies and aware that my legislature may not protect the housing security of myself, my neighbors, and Oregonians at-large is infuriating. If I received a 15% rent spike right now, I would have to take on additional exorbitant loans that would financially cripple me for countless decades just to stay under a roof. And I could be considered one of the lucky ones. Students like myself are not alone in this - high rents are pushing more and more families to the brink. Solving our housing crisis starts with keeping people housed. Yes, we need more housing long-term, and we need relief for renters today so people stay housed.

Not supporting SB 722 means you are saying no to people like me who are only here to give back to Oregon. I came here not only for affordability; I came here because I believed in the potential for Oregon, specifically, to be the place I could make a career out of improving others' lives. Not supporting SB 722 means paving the way for homelessness to increase, and I am terrified knowing that my legislators may kill this important policy proposal, effectively signing my ticket to eviction. SB 722 is the only policy proposal on the table this session that would provide relief for renters currently experiencing or at risk of serious affordability challenges. The bill would prevent price inflation and rent spikes for tens of thousands of renters and rein in

corporate manipulation of the market.

I am urging you to support SB 722. It is needed to protect housing stability over corporate profits, and to prevent further escalation of the homelessness crisis.

Thank you,
Michelle Auster