

# OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE



## SUPPORT SB 611 SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING + DEVELOPMENT MARCH 22, 2023

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your time and consideration. On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (Oregon SATF), **I am pleased to submit testimony in support of SB 611.**

*At the Oregon SATF, our mission is to facilitate and support a collaborative, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to violence and abuse in Oregon. Our goal is to prevent sexual violence from happening in the first place, while simultaneously improving our response efforts to mitigate trauma and ensure the safety and security of all victims and survivors.*

**We strongly urge you to pass SB 611 as a critical homelessness prevention strategy, to protect seniors, families, individuals and communities across the state from extreme rent increases and displacement.**

**Preserving housing stability is essential for all survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Oregon.** It is well-documented that housing instability and homelessness increases the risk of experiencing violence and abuse. Survivors who are trying to maintain safety for themselves and their families are often rent-burdened, and one unreasonable rent increase can cause possible homelessness, and vulnerability to abuse.

As technical assistance providers to professionals responding to and working to prevent sexual violence in Oregon, we have seen an increase in technical assistance requests related to housing rise sharply over the last five years.

**Four out of every ten (4/10) Oregonians rent their homes and they already pay the ninth highest rent in the nation.** The statewide stories of massive rent increases in communities large and small show that we have a rent crisis that must be addressed. Whether these increases are hitting entire buildings or mobile home parks or individuals, each and every one puts people at risk of displacement and homelessness.

By ensuring access to safe housing, our state would be taking important steps to prevent additional, future violence for survivors and their families.

**SB 611 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.**

Oregon's housing emergency goes beyond lack of supply and the number of people living without homes or shelter. We have a rental emergency as well, with tenants living just one rent increase notice away from displacement and possible homelessness.

Without SB 611 to stop runaway and extreme rent increases, we will continue to see people displaced onto the streets more quickly than we can rehouse people. Without passage of SB 611, Oregon's success in addressing the housing crisis is at grave risk.

**Please pass SB 611 as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration.**

Respectfully,



Bethany Walmsley  
Interim Executive Director  
[director@oregonsatf.org](mailto:director@oregonsatf.org)

<sup>1</sup> SATF has a proud history of addressing sexual violence in Oregon, the spirit of which comes from our volunteer membership. Appointed by Attorney General Rosenblum, members serve on 1 of 8 subcommittees including: Advocacy Response, Campus, Criminal Justice, Legislative & Public Policy, Medical-Forensic, Men's Engagement, Offender Management, and Prevention Education.

Our mission is to improve the response to and prevention of sexual violence in Oregon through multi-disciplinary training, technical assistance, and policy advocacy.