

Submitter: Jacob Bond
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2967

Members of the Committee - I am writing today to urge you to oppose HB 3111 and HB 2697. I am an affordable housing provider in OR, which is a very challenging business, and a natural opponent of the proposed bills. I am sure you're aware of the conflict these bills present for housing providers, especially at a time when the industry is being asked to cap our pricing with no caps on the costs we incur to operate, maintain and improve our properties for the benefit of the tenant. There are many reasons to implement regulations that are aimed to protect consumers/renters but there is also a cost associated with that regulation and we have to weigh the good with the bad. Shifting the cost burden of screening to the property owner provides a very small benefit to the prospective tenant but places a huge burden on housing providers. Further, it creates a moral hazard, incentivizing frivolous applications, wasting valuable time and resources. Housing providers like myself will need to start making tough choices to forego maintenance and improvements that are for the benefit of the tenant as revenue stagnates while expenses skyrocket. In the end, I will be forced to take more units out of the available pool of rentals as it won't make economic sense to keep them as rentals.

HB 3111, while intended to keep people housed, which is our united goal in all of this, only further perpetuates the challenges housing providers faced as a result of the eviction policies introduced during covid. Please understand that eviction is our last resort, we don't want to evict any of our tenants and worked tirelessly with folks who had legitimate hardships as a result of covid, to keep them housed and fed. We bought groceries for people, waived fees, came up with overly generous payment plans, etc. As you know, there were many tenants who chose to ignore their responsibilities, even while gainfully employed, and inflicted a huge toll on the whole system by taking advantage of the policies/regulation that was designed to help those who needed it. HB 3111 will be no different, giving those who are choosing to take advantage the ability to do so, prolonging the period by which they can evade their responsibilities and increasing the cost for all along the way. As an example, we had a tenant who vacated the premise but continued to provide access to her brother who was using, cooking and selling drugs out of the unit. The unit is now a hazardous materials cleanup site, will cost me upwards of \$40k to remedy, and was an incredible nuisance to the other tenants who feared for their health and safety. Why is it the responsibility of those that are abiding by the terms of their lease to take on the burden of those who don't?