

Submitter: Kathryn Chambers
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB611

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kathryn Chambers and I am a renter living in Salem. I have lived in my small community in South Salem for 13 years. I am a 67-year-old retiree on a fixed income. I worked for 27 years for a large company, I volunteer for the Humane Society, and I'm active in the South Salem Neighborhood Association. And sometime in the next year, you may see me on your drive into Salem standing on the street corner or living in a tent because I am not joking when I say people like me are going to be the new face of homelessness in Oregon.

I wake up every day and go to sleep worrying about keeping a roof over my head. I live with the constant stress of knowing that if my landlord raises my rent by the allowable 14.6%, I will be priced out of my home. My fixed income is just over the threshold to qualify for any assistance, but not enough income to pay that kind of rent increase. I am not alone. Senior citizens on fixed incomes who are seeing their rent increase by hundreds of dollars a month are going to face a choice between housing and food, or housing and medical treatment.

I fear asking my landlord for repairs because of the power imbalance that exists when someone can choose to price you out of your lease simply because you're asking too much. You just try to lay low but at the end of the day, you have no control. It's not like if you don't like a product, you can boycott it; we can't boycott housing.

This isn't something I could have planned for or avoided. This is not about my individual circumstance; I am simply an example of what is about to happen across the state. This is a critical issue and it needs an immediate solution from you, who we put our trust in every time we vote.

Please support Senate Bill 611. Thank you.