

Testimony in Support of HB 3503: Lifting the Ban on Local Rent Control

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and members of the committee, my name is Cynthia Aguilar-Arizmendi and I live in Eugene. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3503, a bill that would lift the ban on local rent control.

I grew up in Northeast Portland in the Cully neighborhood. My neighborhood is no longer the one I grew up in. I don't recognize it anymore. My mother lives in government-subsidized housing. Even that rent has become too much. She was working three jobs at one point to make ends meet; working herself to exhaustion. Sleep deprivation took a toll on her body and she now has health issues that require regular medication and doctor's visits. The truth is, this isn't just about being able to pay for a roof over your head. When you don't have money for food, your children's field trips, utilities, medical emergencies, or fixing the family car, your health significantly suffers. Unfortunately, the people who suffer the most are the ones who are already left behind by the system and are struggling to make ends meet. Our communities' health is on the line.

My mother's story is not a unique one. In fact, this is common among the people I grew up with. Attempts to "improve" neighborhoods like mine, a place that was made up of predominantly Black and Brown low-income households, have forced our neighbors to relocate. Historic homes in the Alberta neighborhood, a historically Black neighborhood, have been bought up and their owners pushed out. People can no longer afford to pay for a home or apartment that takes up more than half of their income.

Studies have proven that rent control works and we must give local jurisdictions the liberty to do what is best for their communities. It's the healthy thing to do, and it's the right thing to do. Your constituents vote you all into office with the hopes you will represent them and do well by them. I urge you to do right by them and pass HB 3503.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Aguilar-Arizmendi