



Student Housing and Childcare Taskforce

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

My name is Nick Keough; I am the Legislative Director of the Oregon Student Association. **I am writing you all today to ask for your support on SB 611, which would protect seniors, families, individuals, and communities across the state from extreme rent increases and displacement.**

Oregon Student Association advocates for the collective interests of students in postsecondary institutions in Oregon and works to make higher education affordable and accessible for all Oregonians.

As I am sure the members of this committee are aware, post-secondary education in Oregon has an affordability crisis. Tuition, fees, and textbooks have skyrocketed in cost over the last few decades. State financial aid has not kept pace with even coming close to covering the cost of tuition, let alone the soaring costs of food and housing across Oregon. Consequentially, students and their families, are increasingly applying for student loans, and going into substantial debt to afford college.

In the process of trying to complete their degrees, students are living on the edge financially. According to the state economist, more than 50% of Oregon renters do not have enough money left over for food, medicine, and basic necessities. For students, who have higher education costs on top of day-to-day living costs, the high cost of housing can be incredibly challenging to afford. Oregon has one of the highest student homelessness rates in the country. According to a 2019 Hope Center #RealCollege survey in 2019, 52% of Oregon's community college students were housing insecure in the previous year and 20% of respondents were homeless. These students' circumstances put them at an incredible disadvantage through no fault of their own. Students are unable to adequately study, adequately learn, and wholly engage in their education when they are housing insecure.

We know all too well that eviction, displacement, and homelessness are particularly difficult for young people and students. For students who are living in college towns with limited housing options, not only are they highly vulnerable to fall victim to predatory tactics by landlords, but they are largely unprotected from significant rent increases that are happening frequently across the state.

It is for these reasons that the Oregon Student Association strongly supports SB 611. We know these extreme rent increases are not isolated incidents. SB 611 is a reasonable proposal that prevents extreme rent increases and displacements, while allowing landlords to take inflation into account and preserving the ability to reset rents to market rates in between tenancies. 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. **We urge you to pass SB 611 as soon as possible.**

Thank you,

Nick Keough (nick@orstudents.org)
Legislative Director, Oregon Student Association