

REPRESENTATIVE ANNESSA HARTMAN  
HOUSE DISTRICT 40



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Andersen,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 3522, which addresses a glaring oversight in Oregon's housing laws that has led to undue hardship for new property owners by giving squatters greater protections than legitimate tenants.

This issue was brought to my attention by our local law enforcement when a new constituent in Gladstone purchased their home through a property auction, only to find that individuals who knew the previous owner had not left the house and claimed squatters' rights. While the new owner and law enforcement attempted to have meaningful conversations with these individuals, it quickly turned into a nightmare. Among other negative activities, the squatters began "protesting" by hanging Nazi flags around the property and making their feelings known by refusing to leave, even when they were offered services to help to relocate.

What should have been a milestone moment turned into a drawn-out and expensive ejectment lawsuit, spending thousands of dollars and waiting months just to gain access to the home they rightfully owned. All because these individuals hadn't forcibly entered, and there was no landlord-tenant relationship, the new homeowner was legally barred from using the standard eviction process.

Under our current laws, a property owner cannot use the standard eviction process, known as Forcible Entry and Detainer (FED), unless they can prove that a squatter used force to enter or that there was an established landlord-tenant relationship. If these conditions are not met, owners must resort to a separate civil action known as ejectment—a process that is costly, time-consuming, and significantly slower than eviction.

HB 3522 streamlines this system by making a simple but necessary change to ORS 105.115, allowing property owners to use the FED eviction process to remove squatters, even when there is no evidence of forced entry or a formal rental agreement.

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This bill does not target those who are struggling with housing insecurity, nor does it change the legal process for tenants who have a legitimate rental arrangement. It simply ensures that squatters cannot manipulate the legal system to delay removal at the expense of rightful property owners.

I want to thank the Oregon Law Center for working with my office to craft this legislation, as well as Multifamily Northwest and other stakeholders who have lent their support. It's a testament to how we can come together to create housing policies that are fair, practical, and rooted in reality.

We are facing a housing crisis in Oregon, and I remain committed to solutions that expand access to stable and affordable housing. But we cannot allow gaps in our laws to create situations where unauthorized occupants have more rights than lawful tenants or homeowners.

Finally, I want to note that there's a -1 amendment posted to OLIS that clarifies that landlords, in addition to property owners, can remove squatters through this bill.

HB 3522 is a necessary fix to a problem that has gone unaddressed for too long. I urge your support, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annessa Hartman".

Representative Annessa Hartman  
House District 40 – Gladstone, Oregon City, North Clackamas County