

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

Talk to a renter with a hard, low wage job. Be kind. Moving and finding a rental is the most traumatic life event for anyone who does not own a home. It's up there with being in a car crash, death of a family member or a divorce or loss of job or hunger. And often 3 of those happen at once.

Those who argue for rental application fees fail to admit the truth of renters. As a renter I could not wait to apply for many places. The truth is you can't wait, because if you wait even one minute, you do not get the apartment, and that means you are risking another 45 minutes on a work and day care commute.

Perhaps the fan club of fees has never talked to renters before and after Vermont and Massachusetts banned fees. The sky has not fallen on landlords.

Renters are pushed into trauma and homelessness, not landlords. If we really care about renters we must work harder to protect renters at every risk level. This will cost nothing to pass, and it will reduce the burden in courts over fees not refunded when they should be.

Even under new 2023 laws renters have to go to small claims court to get fees back, even when another person got to the rental first. Such landlords never used the renter fee. We don't need a data report, we have the truth it happened to your fellow lawmakers.

Those who argue for fees do not admit the truth. Most often there is no way to know before you apply if YES/NO you can pass all the qualifications. Renters are forced to play every game in the carnival even though they know it's unlikely they will be first to win. It's rigged, we have no choice. You try, or you wind up in a tent or living far away or on a couch.

The people who argue against this bill show they don't know or care about these truths of mine. It does not matter if they do not care or do not know, that's how business works.

There is no greater trauma than seeking housing. For landlords, all they have to do is take their long roster of people who are standing in line, and before they pay for a background check, they call that renter and say, you are the next in line, and I'm about to run a background check. Did you find another place, and can you afford x per month with me. At most landlords will pay for 2 background checks, and as we

know, those costs always get balanced to all renters.

The sky will not fall, landlords will not be paying for more background checks, in fact they will be smarter about their background checks, and even if they are careless and do too many background checks, as always the renters are the one's who pay for their landlord's rent, bills and mistakes.

Landlords are in this business for profit, plain and simple, otherwise they would have another job or invest in bonds or the stock market for higher returns.

I have experienced great trauma as a renter for at least 17 years of my 56 years alive. 2 of those in Portland. I did not experience stress 18 years and under when my parents owned a broken down home for 18k in 1967, a year after I was born. I have never had stress as a first time homeowner in Portland in 2004 at the age of 38 when I had finally saved all my money for a down payment. As a home owner I have extreme comfort in equity.

I came in person to testify, but my time was used by Co Chair Vikki Breese Iverson asking "data" of Rep Gamba for his bill. Yet no data was presented by Rep Manix when he began discussion on the Manix landlord repbulican bill.

<https://youtu.be/GPsg9QWJpP8>
VIDEO OF MY TESTIMONY ABOVE url