Submitter: Cassandra Barrientos

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1530

Dear Senators,

My name is Cassandra Barrientos, and I am a tenant living in Eugene. I am writing today to urge you to support Senate Bill 1530 because it is 100% necessary, and I want to share my story so you understand why I feel this way.

Whilst I was born in California, my mother moved me up here when I was 2 to be with family. All of my schooling, from Pre-School all the way to College, was conducted here in Oregon. My first job from age 18 all the way to my current job now at age 34 have all been here in Oregon. Every single tax dollar I have earned has been here, in Oregon. Almost every single tax dollar I have received from paying taxes has gone back into Oregon's economy. Even my two stimulus checks during the Pandemic were fully spent here in the Willamette Valley. Unlike many of the rich population, I pay my taxes (all of them!) every single year, without fail, and have since 2009, when I entered the full-time workforce. You're welcome.

This State has only ever made money off of my existence, therefore I, despite my out-of-state birth, am truly an Oregonian, wouldn't you agree? So why, then, are immigrants from out of state and expats from out of COUNTRY able to take advantage of our housing market by selling their overly inflated homes and coming here to buy one, when myself and others like me (Oregonians!) are stuck renting apartments for the rest of our lives? Why are corporations--who are not HUMANS, despite all the tax cuts you've given--able to come in and buy up huge swaths of land, homes, apartments, even commercial lots to turn over for next to nothing, then charge drastically inflated rent/mortgages? Why do you, our State Senators and Elected Officials, view their money as superior over your own people's?

Why is there a huge (still growing) class of people called "The Working Homeless", when houses and apartment complexes lay languishing, uninhabited? Why are Oregonians forced to live and work out of their own vehicles because housing companies require 3x rent, a 700+ credit score, an employer statement, and multiple months' worth of bank statements now? Why is the cul-de-sac down the road wanting 5x rent than they did in the 90s, when none of the homes have even had work done on them? The same goes for mortgages; why is the average house price (we're talking basic 3bd 2ba, no land other than a small yard) $500k in Eugene, when the average job pays too little for someone to even be considered to take out a loan?

Why are you allowing such nefarious and wasteful behavior to impact those that pay

the very taxes that provide your salary? Why are hard-working Oregonians not allowed a place to live at a decent price? Why are you selling off all our land to out-of-staters who just want to destroy it and sell its timber for all the cash it's worth, instead of your own people who want to conserve it and keep Oregon green? You complain that there's no upcoming workforce, yet people WANT to have children--they just have nowhere to raise them. What use is it to upgrade our schools if no one can afford to live near and send their kids there?

Food prices are rising, gas too, DMV fees, rent hikes, move-in fees, application fees, all of it. You are allowing your people to be squeezed of all their capital then turning around and complaining that the economy is suffering. At this point, the cruelty really does feel on purpose. The Working and Middle Classes are the backbone of this Country so many of you long to "Make Great Again", but all you're doing is giving more tax cuts to the 1% and Corps, none of whom have ever farmed your lands, fed your constituents, built your roads or homes--homes that YOU can afford due to all of OUR work. What do we get? A tent in the street.

This cannot stand. How can lawmakers keep turning a blind eye to something so terribly wrong here? It is an outrage and an injustice.

There is no thriving here in Oregon, only surviving. And surviving is not living.