



We build strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter.

June 21, 2023

RE: Support for SB 611B

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shannon Vilhauer and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. On behalf of our Board of Directors and the 24 local Habitat for Humanity affiliates we serve, I am writing to express Habitat for Humanity of Oregon's strong support of SB 611B.

We strongly urge you to pass SB 611B as a critical homelessness prevention strategy for seniors, families, individuals and communities across the state suffering from rent spikes.

Senate Bill 611B provides reasonable and necessary rent stabilization for tenants, while protecting landlords' and developers' ability to maintain a reasonable profit. Lawmakers did the right thing passing SB 608 in 2019. We are now facing extreme inflation and without SB 611B, the 2023 rate increase is an unreasonable 14.6%. Tens of thousands of renters are at risk of displacement due to these extreme rent increases.

Four in 10 Oregonians rent their homes and they pay the ninth highest rent in the nation. Statewide, we have seen stories of massive rent increases in communities large and small, urban and rural. Whether these increases are hitting entire buildings or mobile home parks or individuals, each and every one puts a household at risk of displacement and homelessness.

Studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community. Our current law is allowing extreme rent spikes and the results are playing out in eviction court. Between October and March of this past year, eviction filings averaged more than 2,000 eviction each month. Approximately 86% of all filings were due to unaffordable rent.

At a time when Oregon is experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, we cannot afford to let rent spikes go unchecked.

SB 611B is a reasonable proposal that will prevent extreme rent increases and displacements, while allowing landlords to take inflation into account and preserving the current law's ability to reset rents to market rates in between tenancies. New properties continue to be exempt from the law, ensuring there is no impact on new development.

SB 611B is an action that the legislature can take now to have an immediate impact on our state's housing crisis as we also work on the longer term solutions of increasing supply and providing support to rehouse our currently homeless neighbors.

Please pass SB 611B as soon as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shannon M. Vilhauer".

Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director