

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SB 722, which will help prevent displacement and extreme rent spikes by extending coverage of our state's rent stabilization statutes, and prohibiting the use of price-fixing software to inflate rents.

A stable home is the foundation upon which everything else is built. Without it, the ability to pursue education, maintain employment, or prioritize one's health becomes a battle that Sisyphus could relate to most. As an individual who has experienced housing instability, I understand first hand how rent stabilization offers a crucial sense of control. It helps one not have to constantly worry about surviving the present & allows them to think about building a future.

In the face of Oregon's severe affordable housing crisis, SB 722 stands alone this legislative session as the sole policy capable of delivering immediate and tangible relief from skyrocketing rents. Therefore, passing SB 722 is not just a policy decision, but a vital step towards safeguarding the stability and well-being of countless Oregon families.

To broaden the reach of rent stabilization, the bill modifies the existing 15-year exemption for new construction, reducing it to 7 years, and thereby offering vital protection to an additional 40,000 housing units and between 80,000 and 100,000 Oregonians.

While some argue that increased development is the long-term solution to our housing crisis, that approach ignores the immediate suffering of thousands. These families, teetering on the edge of homelessness, cannot afford to wait years for new construction to alleviate the pressure. They need relief now. We cannot prioritize theoretical future gains over the very real, immediate needs of our most vulnerable residents.

SB 722 represents a crucial choice: will we prioritize the housing stability of Oregon families or the unchecked pursuit of corporate profits? The current trajectory allows for exorbitant rent increases, directly fueling the escalating homelessness crisis. This bill is a necessary intervention, a safeguard against predatory practices that exploit a desperate housing market.

My own experience with housing instability underscores the urgent need for SB 722, which offers a vital safety net against the crushing anxiety of displacement. Just as I struggled to find stability, this bill provides a foundation for thousands of Oregonians to build a secure future, preventing further escalation of the homelessness crisis.

For all of these reasons, we urge your strong support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,
Travis Mauzy
Portland State University Masters of Urban and Regional Planning Graduate Student