

Submitter: Joel Spector
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB158

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

I am urging your opposition to SB 158. This bill is missing critical consumer protections and could subject tenants to fair housing violations. These types of issues are likely to disproportionately impact low-income and Black, Indigenous, immigrant and other communities of color.

I have an openly dishonest landlord, who would leap on this as an opportunity to charge exorbitant fees to the tenants in addition to their agreed-upon rent. The law as it exists works fine; the only purpose for this legislation is to allow insurance profiteering.

This type of practice does not remove any financial risk for tenants, and at worst can harm tenants by charging non-refundable fees and still being subjected to damages.

It could create a payday lending scheme for security deposits. And there is no cap on the total fees or regulation around the fee amounts.

Security deposits pose a financial burden on tenants but the practice is well-established, ubiquitous and in places like the City of Portland regulated. If policymakers are serious about reducing barriers to entry to housing, we should look at solutions rooted in consumer protection, such as deposit regulations, installment payments, low-cost loans, and more. I urge your opposition to SB 158.

Sincerely,

Joel Spector