

Submitter: Britney VanCitters
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3493

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Pahm and Drazan, and members of the committee,

My name is Britney VanCitters and I live in SE Portland. I'm writing in strong support of HB 3493 to ensure the rights of voters are not infringed upon by landlords.

Voters should have the right to make their own decisions about politics, have access to all available information about elections and candidates, and express their First Amendment right of free speech. However, when landlords have the power to prohibit political canvassers from knocking doors or preventing tenants from displaying political signs, their rights are being infringed upon.

We lived in an apartment in a nearby SE Portland neighborhood from early 2020 to mid 2021. We displayed a Black Lives Matter sign in our window shortly after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. After about 5 weeks, our building manager asked that we remove the sign at the owner's request. I was annoyed and felt like I should be able to display a sign that I agree with in my own home. I felt like the request was unnecessary and politically motivated, because it was not like my sign was causing harm to anybody or resulting in property vandalism. So what was the problem?

I remember that interaction with the building manager well. She was clearly uncomfortable asking me to remove the sign. She got somewhat defensive and made it clear that it was not *her* decision, *she* wasn't asking us to remove the sign-- it was the building owner. I always felt some type of way about the situation, and wondered if things would have played out differently if my sign had said something that the building owner agreed with.

At the end of the day, it shouldn't matter whether the building owner agreed with my sign or not. It was my right to express my opinion freely, and he infringed upon that because Oregon law said he could. It's not right, and it's not okay.

I urge the Committee to vote YES on HB 3493.

Thank you,
Britney VanCitters
SE Portland, OR