

Submitter: Hanna Gentile

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB611

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 611. My name is Hanna Gentile, and I am a longtime Portland tenant. I strongly urge you to pass SB 611 for the protection of vulnerable tenants across the state. I have seen firsthand the effects of rent spikes in my community, and marginalized groups such as seniors, people of color, and disabled residents have suffered the most at the hands of landlord greed. Passing SB 611 would help prevent Oregonians from being pushed out of their homes and onto the streets, where lack of housing is becoming increasingly more criminalized, especially in Portland, where much of the Oregon population resides. As a young renter, myself and my peers have either been terribly impacted by these rent hikes or live in fear that they could be lurking around the corner with little to no resources to combat this issue. We all live at risk of displacement and homelessness, and landlord greed cannot be placed above the basic human rights of tenants across our state.

SB 611 is an immediate action that the legislature can take to positively impact Oregon's housing crisis as we also work on the longer term solutions of providing support to rehouse our currently houseless neighbors. Wages are not rising at the pace of rent increases, making these hikes genuinely impossible to afford. Reports of extreme increases such as 32%, 47%, 50% are becoming more common, and these increases are the functional equivalent of an eviction with few options to rehouse after eviction.

SB 611 would:

1. Limit rent increases to 3% + inflation with maximum increase of 8% during a calendar year.
2. Narrow the loophole, applying rent stabilization to buildings older than 3 years, which increases the number of people protected while exempting new construction.
3. Increase relocation assistance to three-months' rent to help tenants displaced through no fault of their own avoid homelessness. Landlords with four units or less are exempt from this provision.

The rent increase reports from across Oregon show the great need for SB 611. Studies show that just a \$100 increase in median rents in a community is tied to a 9% increase in homelessness in that community. 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. A reasonable rent limit will help prevent high-rent home loss

and prevent our state's homeless crisis from getting worse. The legislature did the right thing in passing the first rent limit in 2019 but as we have all learned now, the limit did not account for runaway inflation.

Without SB 611 to stop runaway and extreme rent increases, we will continue to see people displaced onto the streets more quickly than we can rehouse people. Without passage of SB 611, Oregon's success in addressing the housing crisis is at grave risk.

Please pass SB 611 as soon as possible for the emergency protection of all Oregonian tenants. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hanna Gentile  
Oregon Renter