

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

I'm writing to ask that you prioritize the swift passage of Senate Bill 611. Four in 10 Oregonians rent their homes and are already paying some of the highest rents in the nation.

Keeping rent reasonable impacts me personally. If my rent increased more than 10%, I would need to find another job to increase my income. In my experience, that is a process which can take months. Moving to more affordable housing is not a reasonable option for myself because I do not qualify for low-income housing, and my current apartment is already one of the most affordable alternatives. Even if I could find a cheaper apartment, I may not be able to afford the deposits, fees and moving costs, and it would have significant negative impacts on my commute and mental health. Myself and most of the people I know face similar barriers to relocation, meaning our housing and personal stability depends on rent increases that match wage increases.

Everyone in Oregon deserves safe and stable housing but our high rental costs and housing inequities are forcing families out of their homes. While the Oregon housing market provides skyrocketing property wealth for landlords, renters have nothing to fall back on when their monthly costs rise beyond their paychecks.

Very few people can afford a 14.6% housing cost increase. Getting an increase that high may as well be an eviction notice for Oregon renters.

SB 611 is a reasonable approach. Allowable annual rent increases for current tenants will be more predictable for current tenants and more homes will be protected. And between tenants, landlords can charge whatever the market will bear for vacant units.

SB 611 does not solve all the inequities in our housing market, but it is an important step to more fairness and is an essential element in the legislature's response to the state's housing and homelessness crisis.

Please vote yes on SB 611 to prevent more high-rent homelessness in our communities.

Sincerely,

Forest Burdette
Milwaukie, OR