

My name is Jessica Israel and my family currently lives in Cannery Row Apartments in Sherwood, OR. Although Sherwood is a small town, on the cusp of suburbia and rural, we are now being priced out of the area – and out of the state, as a whole. In October, our apartment building was purchased by a new company, SR Watt Company, and put under new property management with Cushman & Wakefield.

Less than three months later, in January, they gave us a notice stating they were raising our rent by 32%, which is \$560 more month or almost \$7,000 more per year, upon lease renewal. If we don't sign a new lease at the higher rate, the notice made it clear that we would have to find a new place in less than 60 days in order to be able to give the required 30-day notice, or else we may be forced to pay a month-to-month rent increase of 50%. We would never think that it is okay for someone to instantaneously lose 32% of their income, so how can it be allowed as a rent increase?

This increase is horrifying as we have a small child, my husband became permanently injured during the pandemic as an essential worker, and I have non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma cancer. We don't know what we are going to do.

It is unconscionable to think that people can afford to pay that much extra per month. They don't even pretend to act like this is a result of increased costs on their end nor are they promising any upgrades. They simply say that it is the 'market rate'.

To make matters worse, I recently found out that while others received a, still high increase of 15%, we were the only residents to get the 32% increase offer. We are the only Black Hispanic Jews in our entire complex. It is clear that this 32% rent increase is both predatory and discriminatory. As you know, Black women with children face the highest rates of eviction. Their attempts to push us out of our home could reduce an already small minority population in Sherwood. Where we live is not just a unit in a company's portfolio – it is our home. Also, moving is not easy – emotionally, physically, and financially.

The truth is, we are being priced out and pushed out. These things are a major contributor to the current homelessness and housing affordability crisis. This crisis affects all of us – families with children that will have to rent a single room just to have a roof over their head, married couples that will lose their home and have to move in with family, seniors who will be forced to live in the streets, and more. Small businesses will be affected because they will not be able to hire local workers, due to the high cost of living, which requires wages more than they can afford to pay. Local politicians will lose their seats because the residents who supported them and voted them in office will be gone. We always say "wow – this neighborhood has changed – what happened" – well, this is one of the things that have happened, people are priced out.

While the passage of SB611 may happen too late to help my family, we are calling on all lawmakers to support this bill to help stabilize rents in Oregon. It may not fix every issue, but it will help keep more people in their homes. Without closing the loopholes in Oregon's rent stabilization law and reducing the maximum percentage increases allowed - landlords will continue to go unchecked and not only be allowed to push out residents by giving them high increases, but also engage in discriminatory practices.

Jessica Israel
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