

Testimony in Support of SB 722

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

My name is Tyler Mac Innis, Policy Analyst for the Oregon Center for Public Policy, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 722 on behalf of the Center. The Oregon Center for Public Policy is a nonpartisan think tank dedicated to improving the economic outcomes for all Oregonians, particularly low-income families and Oregonians of color, through research and analysis.

Oregonians are struggling to get by. More than two in every five Oregonians earn too little to afford a basic survival budget.¹ The rising cost of daily life forces families to make impossible choices between paying their rent, or keeping food on the table. Indeed, when Congress temporarily expanded the federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) in 2021 to help families navigate the economic fallout of the pandemic, nearly nine in 10 low-income Oregon households reported spending their CTC on basic needs such as housing.²

SB 722 is the best tool on the table this session to provide immediate and measurable protection for Oregonians suffering due to rent spikes as a result of our state's affordable housing crisis.

The bill reduces the current 15-year exemption for new construction from our statewide rent stabilization statute down to 7 years. This change would provide reasonable rent stabilization protection for an additional 40,000 housing units, covering between 80,000 to 100,000 Oregonians. This strikes a balance between continuing to encourage new units to come into the market and ensuring that those units do not contribute to long-term gentrification and price inflation.

The bill also amends the Landlord-Tenant Act to prohibit the use of price-fixing AI software to artificially inflate rents. These kinds of products are the subject of national attention and concern, and Oregon has joined a federal lawsuit against this



practice. Many local jurisdictions are taking steps to curtail this practice. Price fixing has no place in Oregon, and we cannot afford to allow this practice to exacerbate our housing crisis.

At the Center we believe all Oregonians deserve a real opportunity to thrive. Importantly, we believe this vision won't be achieved by accident or by chance, but instead by good public policy. SB 722 is the kind of good public policy Oregonians need to navigate our affordability crisis.

We urge you to support SB 722.

¹ United for Alice, Oregon in the Crosscurrents: An Update on Financial Hardship in Oregon, United Way of Northern New Jersey, available at <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/oregon>.

² Mac Innis, Tyler, "The Oregon Kids' Credit would be a lifeline for hundreds of thousands of Oregon children," Oregon Center for Public Policy, February 23, 2023, available at <https://www.ocpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/202302OKC-issue-brief.pdf>.

