



June 21, 2023

To: House Rules Committee
From: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda
RE: Support of SB 611

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon (OCO) is a statewide organization that advances equitable policies, data and research, and whole-child advocacy. The Children's Agenda, convened by OCO, brings together ~130 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the well-being of Oregon's children, youth, and families. Our collective created a 2023 legislative agenda that focuses on community-driven solutions to provide access and opportunities for all children and families. We strongly urge you to pass SB 611B as a critical homelessness prevention strategy for seniors, families, individuals, and communities across the state suffering from rent spikes.

A safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need. Every Oregonian should have access to a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home and be protected from extreme rent increases. Four in ten Oregonians rent their homes, and after making the rent payment, more than 50% of them don't have enough money to cover basic necessities like food, child care, or health care.¹ Despite this reality, there has already been a 14.6% rent increase this year for older buildings and unlimited increases for newer buildings.² These rent increases directly lead to increased eviction rates, putting children and their families at an increased risk for homelessness.

Oregon already has one of the highest rates of youth homelessness in the country. Youths who are in foster care, who identify as LGBTQ+, and/or are youth of color, especially Black, Latinx, and/or Indigenous, are especially at risk of being homeless. Over 21,000 Oregon students experienced homelessness during the 2019-2020 school year.³ These students' circumstances put them at an incredible disadvantage through no fault of their own. They are unable to adequately study, adequately learn, and wholly engage in their education. These students who experience homelessness are 27% less likely to graduate from high school than housed students.

¹ <https://www.stablehomesor.org/>

² <https://www.stablehomesor.org/>

³ <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

Senate Bill 611B provides reasonable and necessary rent stabilization for tenants, while protecting landlords' and developers' ability to maintain a reasonable profit. Lawmakers did the right thing passing SB 608 in 2019, but we are now facing extreme inflation. Without SB 611B, the 2023 rate increase is an unreasonable 14.6%. Tens of thousands of renters are at risk of displacement due to these extreme rent increases.

SB 611B is an action that the legislature can take now to have an immediate impact on our state's housing crisis as we also work on the longer term solutions of increasing supply and providing support to rehouse our currently homeless neighbors. We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge your support of SB 611 to prevent eviction and displacement, ensuring stable homes for Oregon's children and families.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Ivy Major-McDowall
Policy and Advocacy Director

View the 2023 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda