



Coalition of
Communities of
Color

March 23, 2023

Re: Support for SB 611 to reduce evictions and prevent homelessness

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 611. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am writing on behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally-specific organizations dedicated to collective action for racial justice.

Our communities urgently need relief from the extreme rent increases and resulting displacement occurring across the state. Black, Indigenous, Latine, and Pacific Islander Oregonians are all more likely to rent their homes as a result of income and wealth disparities and other systemic inequities. Many of our coalition's members are service providers who work tirelessly to help individuals and families access and stay in housing through rent assistance, wraparound services, and other supports needed to maintain stable homes. But spikes in rent can push vulnerable households into homelessness that can cascade into job loss, long-term financial instability, and trauma, with intergenerational impacts. Once someone has become homeless, accessing housing becomes even more challenging, requiring significant time and resources to find a new home.

A reasonable rent limit is a critical component of any response to our housing crisis. As you work to invest in more affordable homes, increase housing supply, and provide critical supportive services and treatment, we must stop the inflow of individuals and families becoming homeless due to skyrocketing rents. In 2020, a [U.S. Government Accountability Office report](#) found that a \$100 rent increase led to a 9 percent increase in homelessness, and [nationwide research](#) indicates that communities with the highest rates of homelessness also have the highest rents. And at a time with high inflation, renters are struggling more than ever. A recent piece from the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis [notes that Oregon's renter families continue to struggle with housing costs](#), and [more than half of Oregon renters](#) don't have enough residual income left over after paying rent to afford other essentials. Ensuring that rent increases keep pace with the economic circumstances of Oregonians is the only way to stem this crisis.

Thank you for your work this session to take meaningful action on housing affordability and homelessness. SB 611 must be a part of our state's response to our housing crisis, and we respectfully urge you to pass this bill.

Thank you,
Jenny Lee, Deputy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color