

Dear Members of the Senate Housing Committee:

I am writing to support SB 722, a bill that would put an stop AI-driven rent price-fixing and close the construction rent cap loophole, both of which are being exploited by corporate landlords to squeeze tenants across Oregon.

We are in a rental affordability crisis, and unchecked rent hikes are pushing working Oregonians out of their homes. We cannot allow Wall Street landlords and AI algorithms to dictate the cost of housing.

There are two reasons why SB 722 is needed:

1. Closing the New Construction Rent Cap Loophole

Oregon's rent stabilization law was designed to protect tenants from massive, unexpected rent increases, but corporate landlords have a loophole, newly constructed buildings are exempt. Many tenants in buildings that are nearly a decade old are now facing rent increases of \$300, \$500, even \$700 per month. There is no economic justification for these extreme hikes. This is price gouging, plain and simple.

2. Banning AI Rent-Setting Software

Real estate investment trusts (REITs) and major landlords like Greystar are using AI price-fixing tools like RealPage to artificially inflate rents, often without any human oversight. These systems allow corporate landlords to coordinate rent increases, pushing prices far beyond what is reasonable and eliminating real competition in the rental market.

The Oregon Department of Justice has already joined a national lawsuit against RealPage, which exposed how these AI tools allow landlords to manipulate rental markets and maximize profits at tenants' expense. In areas like Beaverton, Aloha, and Portland's Central Eastside, RealPage controls rent pricing for over 30% of apartments. This means these price hikes are coordinated and not based on fair market supply and demand.

Individuals have no power to fight these unfair rent increases. Rising rents are driving more people into homelessness and as you know homelessness is already a huge problem in this state.

Oregon renters should not be at the mercy of corporate algorithms and hedge fund landlords. Housing is a human necessity, not a commodity to be controlled by software designed to extract every possible dollar from tenants. SB 722 is a common-sense policy that restores fairness to our housing market and ensures that rent increases are based on real conditions, not AI-driven price-fixing.

I urge you to vote YES on SB 722 to protect Oregon renters from predatory rent hikes and restore accountability in our rental market.

Sincerely,

Matthew Johnson