

We submit this testimony on behalf of the National Homelessness Law Center (“Law Center”) in support of HB 2372, which would eliminate a landlord’s ability to terminate residential tenancy without cause. This critical homelessness prevention policy would protect housing stability and security of tenure for responsible renters while preserving landlords’ freedom to remove tenants for good cause.

The Law Center is the nation’s only legal advocacy organization dedicated solely to ending and preventing homelessness using the power of the law. We have over thirty years of experience advocating for effective policies to prevent homelessness and promote the human right to housing.

Record poverty, prolonged unemployment, shrinking affordable housing stock, and the rising cost of housing has contributed to a homelessness crisis in Oregon. This crisis disproportionately harms Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other People of Color, and these harms are made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address Oregon’s homeless crisis, sensible, equitable, and cost-effective policies that support housed and unhoused people alike are needed.

No-cause evictions are a direct cause of homelessness when landlords displace existing tenants in favor of new tenants who can afford higher rents. Because there are too few accessible and affordable rental units available to Oregon residents who need them, responsible renters who are displaced from their housing due to no-cause evictions will struggle to find replacement housing – and may be unable to do so. This will worsen Oregon’s homelessness crisis, adding to the strain on local homeless services and grow the number of people who live outside in public space for lack of any other option.

Along with increasing housing instability and homelessness, no-cause evictions also trigger a flood of other harms. The scramble to find replacement housing can force renters to move into housing that they cannot sustainably afford, if they can find replacement housing at all, contributing to increased financial insecurity and difficult choices between paying for rent or other necessities like food, child care, medicine and medical treatment. Eviction can also contribute to job loss, result in negative outcomes for children by disrupting their education, and even increase preventable hospitalizations.

Legislation like HB 2372 can stop this harmful cycle by preventing housing loss of responsible Oregon renters while preserving the ability of landlords to ensure that their rental units are occupied by tenants who pay their rents on time and abide by their reasonable lease terms.

The Law Center recommends an end to no-cause evictions as a key homelessness prevention policy in our report, Protect Tenants/Prevent Homelessness, and we urge you to join other jurisdictions that have enacted no-cause eviction laws by voting to pass HB 2372. In doing so, Oregon will take demonstrate responsible and effective leadership in protecting housing stability, preventing homelessness, and ensuring fairness for all.