

From:
To: [Exhibits SHOUS](#)
Subject: Testimony RE SB 608
Date: Monday, February 4, 2019 12:33:51 PM

Enclosed you will find some of my thoughts and concerns on the proposed housing bill that would limit annual rent increases and require "for cause" evictions.

For context, I work in the non-profit field* and see issues with housing and evictions on a daily basis.

While I understand that in general a "for-cause" evictions have more protection against retaliation and silent discrimination, I have some concerns about unintended consequences that the bill could create.

One concern is that eliminating the "no-cause" eviction will likely increase the use of "for-cause" evictions. Currently, landlords will sometimes use "no cause" evictions even when they think they have grounds to evict someone "for cause." I do recognize that "no cause" evictions have many issues, for example, one can rarely defend against a "no cause" eviction since there is "no cause" listed. However, I'm concerned that this bill will incentivize landlords to hyper-police tenants by looking for lease violations when they want a tenant to move out or if they want to raise the rent. "For cause" evictions seriously negatively impact individuals' ability to find housing in the future. Additionally, evictions impact low-income individuals ability to secure housing vouchers which are imperative for housing security. I would hate to see this policy that is being crafted to help people result in adding to the homelessness crisis in our state.

In my work, I have learned that individuals who are facing evictions typically have very little understanding of the process and their rights and rarely have representation in FED court. I would ask that you take the time to contact legal aid offices around the state and learn about the need for legal representation in these cases. I would also strongly encourage you to pair this bill with **robust** funding for legal representation in evictions and housing related cases. Many cities have started mandating counsel in eviction cases and have seen [great results](#). Additionally, in New York they have found that requiring representation will actually save money - [see this article](#).

The last concern I'll raise is regarding the annual rent increase cap. It's my understanding the landlords may raise rent 7% + CPI per year and if they opt-out of doing so they loose the ability to raise more than 7% + CPI the next year. I'm concerned that many landlords that may have not typically raised rent in a given year will now raise rent annually by 7% + CPI, i.e landlords will simply treat the ceiling on rent increases and increase at that rate each year.

Thank you for considering my testimony. Please reach out with any questions and concerns.

-Lisa Rose Gagnon

*please note that while I cite knowledge from my work I am not speaking on behalf of that organization. These are my personal thoughts and concerns.