

Elders *in* Action

February 15, 2019

Chair Keny-Guyer and Vice-Chairs Noble and Sanchez and Members of the House Human Services and Housing Committee:

Elders in Action is a nonprofit organization that educates, advocates for, and serves low income older adults in Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah Counties. We receive over 200 calls each month from low income older adults looking for resources and assistance on a variety of challenging issues. Affordable housing remains the number one issue facing the seniors who call us.

We are excited that SB 608 is moving forward! We support the restrictions on no cause evictions proposed in the bill as well as the proposed annual cap on rent increases. While we support these concepts wholeheartedly, we have some concerns that the 7% cap may still be too high. However, it is a start!

No cause evictions and rising rents are devastating to older adults. For an eighty year old adult, living only on Social Security income, who has lived in an apartment for over 20 years – even the smallest of rent increases can create turmoil. Often, paying rent will take priority over paying for food or purchasing life sustaining medication. This is not a choice anyone should have to make.

The fact that your hearing room is not filled with seniors does not mean they are not impacted by rising housing costs and no cause evictions. It simply means that they don't have the means to travel to Salem or are too isolated to receive information about legislative processes.

Senate Bill 608 is a beginning. No cause evictions, whenever they occur, are devastating. Rent increases of even 2% can be unsettling. We look forward to a continued discussion about this bill.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Herrigel
Deputy Director