



February 14, 2019

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

RE: Support for SB 608, Tenant Protections

Children First for Oregon urges strong support of SB 608, to provide critical protection against unjust eviction and displacement for the 40% of Oregon households, including many families, who rent their homes. Children First represents the interests of Oregon's 870,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive.

Oregon is in the middle of a statewide housing crisis. In both urban and rural areas, families face the threat of no-cause eviction and extreme rent increases at any time. Over 21,000 students in Oregon's K-12 schools last school year faced housing instability and were found to "lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." Many families faced housing instability because of no-cause evictions or extreme rent increases.

Children often enter foster care for multiple reasons. One factor tracked by the Department of Human Services is inadequate housing and the stress that puts on families. The number of removals including housing instability has been growing over the last three years from 13.1% in 2015 to 17.2% in 2017.

All children deserve an opportunity to succeed in school and life, which is tied to having a stable home. Too many Oregon families and children lack a stable home. Our partners have determined that it is imperative that the legislature address housing instability, and today you have the opportunity to do that.

SB 608 has two critical components, both of which are essential to easing the housing crises on the most vulnerable:

1. It ends the unjust use of no-cause evictions, ensuring that tenants who follow the rules are not ripped from their homes unfairly.
2. It will curb the economic evictions happening throughout the state and help stabilize rents so that tenants can have some modicum of economic stability.

Oregon's housing crises is going to require dozens of solutions, but protecting Oregon families who rent their homes from sudden displacement is one of the most critical. Oregon communities are stronger when everyone, especially children, has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. Children First strongly encourages the committee to pass SB 608 with a "do pass" recommendation.

Sincerely,



**Children First**  
*for Oregon*

Chris Coughlin, Legislative Director