



Testimony in Support of SB 608

Linda Ramsey, RN

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Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 608. My name is Linda Ramsey; I am a retired nurse and member of the Oregon Nurses Association. For 11 years, I worked in Home Health at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis.

I want to tell a story about a patient whose life was changed because he was able to obtain stable housing.

James had been homeless for 20 years. He had substance abuse issues and endured a very unstable life. He ended up in our hospital gravely ill with liver failure and GI bleeding. When James left the hospital he had no place to go, nowhere to safely store his medications and was unable to make needed lifestyle changes. He later returned to the hospital and spent 3 weeks in the ICU seriously ill. Fortunately, James was directly connected to a housing program that is based on the "housing first" model, placing him into a basic apartment that came with intensive case management.

This is where I met James. On my first visit he was emotionally unstable and could not manage his medications. As his home health nurse, I helped to organize his medications to keep him on track and over the course of a month; I was able to teach him how to do it himself. We worked to manage his diabetes and insulin, and I ensured he made it to regular doctor and alcohol rehabilitation appointments.

In one month I saw an enormous difference in James' demeanor, health and ability to follow through with self-care. Stable and affordable housing made all the difference in this man's life.

Achieving quality health outcomes demands that all patients and families have access to fair, affordable and consistent housing. SB 608 represents a critical step toward achieving this goal by helping maintain the supply of housing. The bill will ban no-cause evictions and limit rent increases, allowing tenants to appropriately plan for changes in their housing. In addition, this policy would also especially serve to better protect patients with health conditions, seniors and community members with disabilities from housing displacement that can often result in losing access to vital care providers.

I strongly urge your support for Senate Bill 608. Thank you.