



February 18, 2019

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

We are writing from Street Roots to express our support of Senate Bill 608. For twenty years Street Roots has been supporting people experiencing homelessness and severe poverty to earn an income by selling copies of our newspaper. Vendors purchase papers for 25 cents, sell them for \$1 and keep the profit as their own income. Last year nearly 700 vendors earned close to \$500,000 through paper sales empowering them with essential income they use for rent, food and other needs that improve their quality of life.

Over the past year, our newspaper has covered how the [housing crisis is statewide](#). Skyrocketing rents and no-cause evictions create turmoil in the lives of many residents of our state. It's important that eviction protections and renter relocation fees are gains felt by all Oregonians. And in Multnomah County, where we are based, [two out of three](#) extremely low-income renters spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent, facing undue stress and homelessness at alarming rates. This is not who we are as a community and we know that if we act boldly and collectively we can improve the lives of thousands of Oregonians while simultaneously creating strong, resilient communities where our most vulnerable residents can find safety and security.

The passage of this bill is personal for us and for our vendors. Recently, we sat down with Street Roots vendor Bronwyn Carver who suffered a no-cause eviction nearly five years ago and almost simultaneously lost her job. Bronwyn has been homeless ever since. Bronwyn told us about the home in inner-SE Portland she raised her daughters in for more than a decade. "My neighbors were great," she said. "Everybody was cordial. We hung decorations at Christmastime. It was a great little place." Through tears, Bronwyn told us that when she was evicted, "I lost everything. All my art. Everything. Clothing, furniture, stuff from the kids. I barely managed to save a portfolio of some writings and some pictures. That was it." Bronwyn told us the loss she suffered in her no-cause eviction was deeper than just possessions. She said, "You lose everything. You lose hope, you lose your dignity, you lose self-respect, you lose your children's self respect... You lose a piece of who you are when that happens."

When we asked Bronwyn what she would like to tell legislators considering the passage of SB 608 she said that landlords are, "throwing human beings out in lieu of dollars. And that's just not acceptable. It's not an acceptable practice that monetary gain should take the place of a residency for a family. That long term tenancy actually will make their money greater than short term turnarounds, which is what they'll experience at such a high cost of rent."

The Street Roots [editorial board endorsed SB 608](#). Oregonians need protection from no-cause evictions and egregious rent hikes. We urge you to vote yes on SB 608.

We are so grateful for your service and commitment to making our communities stronger and more stable.

Thank you for your time and your work

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaia Sand".

Kaia Sand
Executive Director, Street Roots

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cole Merkel".

Cole Merkel
Vendor Program Director, Street Roots