

February 1, 2016

House Human Services and Housing Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Committee Members,

The best way to ensure a healthy housing environment for renters and owners is to make it easier to increase the amount of housing at all levels of affordability, while avoiding policy that will reduce new housing, increase the costs, or harm the well-being of the rental community. Property owners are still contending with the fallout of the recession and adding to the cost of doing business will only push housing costs even higher for the majority of renters.

Unfortunately, HB 4001 and HB 4143 make it harder to ensure the well-being of all renters in a community by requiring a 90 day notice to end of tenancy after the first year (currently it's 60 days.) These notices are used when the health or safety of other renters or staff are at risk, but don't fit into eviction criteria.

Here is an example: A property was working diligently to improve the layout of the units and provide upgrades to the appliances. In turn, we issued a 60-day notice to a resident explaining our intentions. After the notice was given, the resident made it their personal mission to harass and belittle the staff on premises. There wasn't enough basis for an eviction notice to be issued because the resident wasn't quite threatening enough to warrant it.

Towards the end the staff had become so afraid of this individual that security was requested for the staff while they waited for the resident's rental agreement to expire. In this instance we worked closely with local authorities and the resident was walking the fine line of what we could address and what we couldn't, falling shy of eviction.

Even after move-out, the intimidation and harassment continued until the local authorities contacted the former resident and made it clear the behavior needed to stop. In this example the current 60-day notice period was very challenging. If we were required to give 90-days' notice, I can't imagine how that would have made things better.

I whole heartedly agree with giving tenancies ample notice of a termination or a rent increase. Professionals in our industry work diligently to make sure our tenants are provided ample time. Still I've witnessed the balance in this arena becoming lopsided in recent years. Please do not make such significant changes to landlord tenant law—these changes will harm the well-being of the rental community, make housing more expensive and reduce the amount of new housing that will be built.

Sincerely,

Shannon Shaffer
Bunting Property Management