



The friendliest store in town.

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2004

May 3, 2017

Senate Committee on Human Services

Written Testimony Submitted by Sarah Joannides, New Seasons Market

Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Sarah Joannides and I am the Director of Social Responsibility at New Seasons Market. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of legislation to end to no-cause evictions.

At New Seasons, a core tenet of our business philosophy is that our staff should be able to live and thrive in the neighborhoods where they work. We believe this makes for a better staff experience, a better customer experience, and it's the best way to bring vitality and a true sense of community to the neighborhoods where we build our stores.

But in today's market that has become a real challenge. What we continue to hear from our staff is that due to skyrocketing rents and low vacancy rates, they're being forced to move further and further away from where they work. And many are finding it harder to hang onto apartments or homes, as landlords are able to evict tenants without cause – even those that pay on time and play by all the rules.

We believe that the vast majority of landlords do right by their tenants. However the existence of no-cause evictions makes removing a tenant all too easy and some landlords are using them as a shortcut to raise rents, to retaliate or even to discriminate. Being evicted without cause can be a traumatic event, and for families already living on the edge, it can be the trigger that causes job loss, and potentially even push people into homelessness.

It seems like pretty basic business sense, but it's worth saying out loud: if your employees are worried by uncertainty about where they're going to live – or if they actually lose their homes – they can't bring their best selves to work. Housing instability can lead to low morale and absenteeism, which impacts productivity. As employers, the need for a stable predictable workforce cannot be overstated.

At New Seasons, it has become clear to us that we cannot deliver on our mission of thriving employees and healthy communities unless businesses like ours engage at the city and state level to address the significant social and economic challenges we face today. That's why I'm here to urge you to end no-cause evictions so that all Oregonians have a safe, stable place to call home.

Thank you.