



May 3, 2017

Chair Gelser and members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, I respectfully request your support for HB 2004A to end no-cause evictions and repeal the ban on rent stabilization.

Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Oregonians experience equality. Throughout Oregon, LGBTQ families, like other Oregonians, are struggling to make ends meet. This is particularly true for transgender individuals, a third of which are living in poverty because of lack of societal acceptance. Every week we hear stories of LGBTQ community members struggling with housing security. It's heartbreaking. We know from studies that no-cause evictions are often used to retaliate, discriminate, and displace. This legislation is an important step to help end housing discrimination many transgender Oregonians experience.

Many landlords are doing right by their tenants, but those who aren't are harming families and damaging communities. Instead of identifying a valid reason to remove a family from their home, bad actor landlords are terminating leases to raise rents or even worse, discriminate against certain tenants. No cause evictions are also used to retaliate against tenants who ask for necessary repairs, making renters afraid to request basic repairs needed to keep their homes safe and habitable. Evictions with no reason and extreme rent increases cause immense financial hardship on working families that can force them to deplete their savings, force them into homelessness and send them into a spiral of poverty. Moreover, these practices disproportionately impact families of color, worsening inequities and pulling communities apart.

In addition, families across Oregon are experiencing extreme rent increases that are forcing them out of their homes and communities. Finding a new affordable apartment near their current home is a serious challenge in our state's highly competitive rental markets. Evictions and economic displacement impact us all by putting more economic burden on our communities through increased demands on social services, shelters, and hospitals by families who become homeless and other costs associated with the disruption caused by housing instability. By contrast, stable homes promote educational opportunity for children and economic opportunity for families – allowing Oregonians to save for a house, pursue new employment options, and open new businesses.

HB 2004A will protect housing stability by creating a just cause eviction standard, which would require a legitimate reason for termination, such as a lease violation or a landlord's business or family necessity. By repealing the state prohibition on local jurisdictions' ability to consider rent stabilization policies, HB 2004A will also restore the ability of local communities to address the rate and speed of rent increases in their community with landlords and renters in their area.

We hope that you will join us in support of HB 2004A.

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Co-Executive Directors