



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF TENANTS
2710 NE 14th Ave, Portland, OR 97212

May 2, 2017

Dear Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen, and Members of the Oregon Senate Human Services Committee,

On behalf of Oregon Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), I respectfully request your support for HB 2004A to end the exploitative use of no-cause evictions and repeal the ban on rent stabilization. Formed in 1996, the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) is Oregon's only statewide tenant rights organization. CAT educates, organizes, and develops the leadership of low-income tenants. Since 1998 CAT has won a number of tenant victories that include upholding protections against discrimination against tenants, affordable housing preservation, improved health and safety inspections and enforcement, and gained energy and people power to assert our collective rights as tenants to stop evictions and unfair practices in the rental market.

Oregon CAT runs a hotline that people can call to learn about their basic rights and responsibilities as a tenant or landlord. We receive over 200 calls per month, from throughout the state. A vast majority of callers to the hotline experience either an abrupt no-cause eviction or excessive rent increase they cannot afford. Nearly 1.5 million Oregonians are renters, which means nearly half of the state are subject the unfair practices that displace them from their homes, as well as their communities. A vote for House Bill 2004A is a vote to stabilize Oregonians. A vote for House Bill 2004A is a vote to take a bold, yet a simple policy shift, to ensure that Oregon's residents stay housed to address the housing crisis.

Many landlords are doing right by their tenants. Although, right now, some landlords use no-cause evictions to avoid the simple legal process for removing tenants. 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 tenants protected under state and federal law. No-cause evictions are often 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 deplete their savings, often times forcing them into homelessness. In the Salem area alone, there are 2167 homeless students from kindergarten to the 12th grade. Increasingly no-cause evictions and rent hikes send Oregonians into a spiral of poverty with limited choices that are near impossible to bounce back from. Moreover, these practices disproportionately impact families of color, worsening inequities and devastating the social foundation of our communities.

Evictions and economic displacement impact us all, putting more economic burden on our communities. It increases the demand on social services, shelters, and hospitals when families or individuals become homeless or housing unstable. 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; and by repealing the state prohibition local control will be restored to jurisdictions. Such as ordinances would only slow how much and how often rent increases for tenants, while still allowing landlords a reasonable rate of return.

Please join us in support of HB 2004A, Oregon's families depend on it.

Sincerely,

Pamela N. Phan
Policy and Organizing Director

Celebrating twenty years of Tenant Power!

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