

**Yes on HB 2004. Restore local control: Give local governments the tools we need to address community issues.**

Dear Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen, and Members of the Committee,

I urge you to support HB 2004 to end no-cause evictions and lift the preemption on rent stabilization policies.

As a person who grew up in the Rogue Valley, I have seen our community grow and change over the years and especially in the last few. It's no secret that southern Oregon is becoming a popular destination. As a recently elected city council person, I recognize that with that growth we need to be strategic in planning around new opportunities and challenges at the local level. One of the biggest challenges our communities are facing is how to provide affordable, accessible and equitable housing to ALL the people who live here and not just the highest bidders.

With wages stagnating in the valley and housing costs exploding, too many in our community are struggling to find and keep a place to live. Families, working people and seniors have been thrown into crisis as they are increasingly becoming displaced from their homes. Nearly half of all families in southern Oregon are considered cost burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. For Jackson county renters, 1 in 3– and three-quarters of low-income renters – are

paying more than 50 percent of their income in rent. That doesn't leave a lot left over to live on.

A recent article in the Mail Tribune featured a mother and 2 young children struggling to find affordable housing in Medford. It cited a study by the University of Wisconsin's School of Medicine and Public Health which found that Josephine County ranked worst in Oregon for counties with "severe housing" problems last year. In Josephine County, 26 percent of households face "severe" challenges, compared to 24 percent in Jackson County. Those were the two worst counties on the list due to the disproportionate cost of housing in southern Oregon compared to income.

With a 1-2% vacancy rate throughout the valley, there is clear need add more to or housing stock. But it would be an oversimplification to say this issue can be resolved exclusively by increasing supply. It's not that developers aren't building new housing, but they aren't building the kind that our communities are most in need of.

The Rogue Valley doesn't just need *more* housing, we need more diverse kinds of housing to meet the needs of the people who live here. Our local governments are working to prioritize more affordable, stable and equitable housing. More mutli-family and higher density housing for workers, and for young families who can't afford traditional houses and seniors looking to downsize to more manageable homes. Since the state lifted the preemption on Inclusionary Zoning, city and county governments now have some tools to incentivize the development of the types of affordable

housing we need. However, the policy that the state passed during the last session only kicks in at 20 units or more. We don't often see developments of that size in southern Oregon and would like to see the threshold lowered for inclusionary zoning.

In addition to prioritizing the right kinds of new housing to build for future growth, we also need to ensure equity for folks who rent here now. That means passing renter protections including stopping no cause evictions. Our local governments need more tools to address these complex issues. That means restoring local control so that communities can implement the policies that work best for them. Please move HB 2004 to the senate floor for a vote.

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