

To: Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Parent living on SE Bush St.

Date: May 3, 2017

Re: In support of HB 2004A to promote fairness and stability for renters

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Olsen, and Members of the Committee:

My housing story

I am the mother of two small children and am a renter in East Portland in the David Douglas School District. My Senator is Michael Dembrow. I have been living in a two-bedroom apartment on SE Bush St. for the last six years. My rent started at \$770 and has increased about \$100 a year over the last couple of years with some accompanying improvements like fresh paint and new carpet. However, I still deal with a pervasive mold problem. Currently I pay \$1050, but in January my building was purchased by a new management company and they notified us that starting in August, rent would increase to \$1280 and that we would need to move out by May. Since then the company changed their terms to allow us to stay, but we would need to fill out a new contract and pay the rent increase. In addition to the rent increase, we will also be responsible for \$80 in water/sewer expenses per month, which is a new expense for our building. Over the last several years many of my relatives and friends—my support system—have had to move to different neighborhoods such as Tigard and Beaverton due to increasing rents. This has been difficult for us as we no longer have support close by. I sought support regarding the rent increase after several weeks and only then found out that I could have been eligible for money for a no-cause eviction. A \$230 rent increase would mean that we would not have enough money to cover our basic needs such medicine, food, car insurance or elevated electricity bills during the Winter.

Why my location is so important

I have been living in an apartment down the street from Earl Boyles Elementary for the last six years. Earl Boyles has been an incredible resource for me and my family. Because it provides early childhood education including a play group for my toddler aged son and my older son has been attending preschool there for the last two years. My older son has received early intervention services at Earl Boyles and has been identified as having special needs. We have a close relationship with his preschool teacher who has provided so many specialized services and attention to help him learn. I was very much hoping that my younger son could continue attending the early learning play groups and when he is old enough, preschool. Because I live so close to the school, I can participate in adult learning classes such as a nutrition class and help my son in preschool when it is needed. My husband currently works in Portland and has tried working in different places including the Oregon coast, but was never able to make enough money. Currently, I am able to stay home with my two children because I take care of my niece and make a small amount of money which provides a financial cushion for my family. If I were to work full time to cover a higher rent, it would have to be at night since I wouldn't be able to afford childcare for both of my children. However, I'm not sure when I would sleep!

The importance of HB 2004A

Although my immediate situation won't be solved by the passage of this bill, I want to speak out so that I can positively influence my community and the state for a better future. I believe that it is important to have rent control and to make it harder for landlords to use no-cause evictions. If such safeguards had been in place I would not be in the predicament that I am in now. Please pass HB 2004A.