



Beaverton School District
HELP Outreach Center
4925 SW Angel Ave.
Beaverton, OR 97005

May 5, 2017

Dear Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Olsen, and members of the Committee,

My name is Lisa Montesana, and I am the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison for the Beaverton School District. I am writing in support of House Bill 2004A to limit no-cause evictions and allow local jurisdictions to implement rent stabilization. We desperately need policies to help keep families in their homes for the wellbeing and educational success of our students.

Over the last 18 months we have been seeing more and more students fall into homelessness due to instability in their rental housing. An increasing number of working families with children move out of the Beaverton School District entirely due to rising rents. These parents work in the Beaverton area, often in service sector jobs, and they can no longer afford to stay in our community. In the past, families would be able to find other housing within Washington County; now, they are moving further out than ever before, far from their jobs and with little access to social services. Families are losing their homes due to large rent increases—some families have seen their rents nearly double. I have been working in this position for ten years, and this school year has been one of the worst for housing instability.

As a homeless student liaison, I know that a stable home is foundation for educational success. We work to create a stable educational experience for students experiencing homelessness. Our goal is to keep students experiencing homelessness in one school for at least an entire school year, but this has become more and more difficult. Children's health, wellbeing, and ability to learn is dramatically impacted by housing instability, and we are seeing increasing numbers of students struggle.

In our area, there are very few options for families who lose their homes. Our shelter system is not equipped to deal with the rising number of families experiencing homelessness. Beaverton does not have any inclement weather shelters that allow children, and Washington County only has a two that are open 3 nights a week. So even during severe weather, families are often forced to travel all the way to Gresham to access basic shelter. On any given night, 3 to 5 families are unsheltered in the Beaverton School District, and across Washington County, about 100 individuals living in families with children have no shelter. We recently worked with a single mother with a five year-old child and an 18 month-old who asked for her landlord to fix the black mold in her unit, which was making her baby ill. After the repairs were made, she was given a \$350 monthly rent increase. She could no longer afford her home and she and her children became homeless. At the time, waiting lists for the family shelters in Washington County were three months long, so her only option for shelter was in Gresham. Since she doesn't own a car, she must take transit with her children from Beaverton, where her job is, to Gresham. By the time she arrives at the shelter, there are no open beds, and she and her children are taken to one of the area churches. There, they sleep on the floor on their coats. Every day, this mother does not know where she and her children will sleep that night and there are many more working families in Washington County experiencing the same situations.

We must prioritize stable homes for our children and families. We must ensure that working parents can continue to live in their communities near their jobs. We need protection for families who rent from no-cause evictions and extreme rent increases so their children can grow up to be healthy, successful and can contribute to our communities in a positive and productive way. I respectfully urge you to vote yes on HB 2004A to help create an Oregon where every child has a stable home. Thank you for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Lisa Montesana

Homeless Education Liaison
Beaverton School District HELP Outreach Center

*Beaverton School District's Goal: **WE** empower all students to achieve post-high school success.*