

5/4/17

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

My name is Jillian Johnsen and I am a housing case manager at Transition Projects and a renter in Portland, Oregon. I am writing you about HB 2004A, which will provide strong protections against no-cause evictions and allow local jurisdictions to implement rent stabilization and I urge you to vote for this bill.

Voting to protect Oregonians who are facing eviction through no REAL fault of their own is going to be a very easy vote to make. Right now, landlords are legally evicting people without cause in order to force out low-income lifelong Oregonians in favor of richer Californians who can afford to pay twice or even three times as much. This is one of the many reasons why Oregon has such a serious housing crisis. I cannot tell you how many women I have worked with who were forced out of their homes without cause, this is very common with women of color.

Things are very bad for renters in Oregon. In fact, according to a national report in 2016, chronic homelessness in Oregon increased by 59.5% from 2014 to 2015 (National Alliance to End Homelessness). In the Portland Metro area, nearly half of our working population is at risk of becoming what is known as “working homeless”, where people have jobs but are homeless because they cannot afford rent or they have been ejected without cause from their homes (KGW Economics of homelessness: Portland renters walk a precarious road).

We are living in a nightmare, and a yes vote on HB 2004A could drastically improve things for your constituents. I’ve lived in Portland my entire life and as a renter, I am constantly terrified that I will be evicted without cause. There is nothing stopping my landlord from evicting me so that he can raise the prices of his units and fill them with people who can pay more. I’m also afraid that I’m going to be forced out of my hometown due to rent increases. I don’t make a lot a woman who works in social services. Please, please vote on the side of the renters and protect us from being thrown on the streets.

Please vote yes on HB 2004A.

Warm regards,

Jillian Johnsen

(My views are my own and I do not speak for Transition Projects. I merely included my title for credibility.)