

Agenda Item 1028

TESTIMONY

2:00 PM TIME CERTAIN

RENTER PROTECTIONS

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

NAME (print)	ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE	Email
✓ PHIL OWEN	5320 SW 18TH DRIVE	PEOWEN@COMCAST.NET
✓ Jessica Blakely	50 Kerr Parkway	
✓ Melissa Mendez	1913 NE 73rd Ave	
✓ Tyler Morris	5745 SW Oleson Rd.	
Candy Robert		
Lauren Gross	3936 NE 12TH Ave.	lauren.gross@yahoo.com
✓ MARIK Alynclaire	10253 SE Bell	malynelaine@yahoo.com
✓ GAIL WILLIAMS	1107 NW 15TH ST Apt 271 GRESHAM 97030	
Collette White	3910 SE 166th #12 Portland, OR 97236	collettewhite.cwg@gmail.com
Autumn Arns	8437 N Westanna Ave #1	autumnarf2002@yahoo.com
✓ Carolyn Anderson	221 1160 STL Que # 522	ceandrsn26@yahoo.com

RENTER PROTECTIONS

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NAME (print)	ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE	Email
✓ June Johnson		sistahjune@gmail.com
✓ Cindy Robert	16200 SW Pacific Hwy #182	
✓ Margot Black	2244 SW Vermont, 97219	margotb@leclark.edu
✓ Edith Zdunich	890 NE 90th Ave 97220	ezdunich@alumni.reed.edu
Nathan Starr	2885 SW Ughas Dr #106 Wilsonville	disabledfatherandsnevicthand@yahoo
Jessica Blakely	50 Kerr Pkwy Lake Oswego	jblakely@trinity-pm.com
Miranda Milligan	50 Kerr Pkwy Lake Oswego	mmilligan-shay@trinity-pm.com
Tyler Morris	5745 SW Oleson Dr Portland OR	
Melissa Mendez	50 Kerr Parkway Lake Oswego	memendez@trinity-pm.com
✓ Katrina Holland	5025 NE Emerson Ct. 97218	katherine@oregoncat.org
SUSAN MADAR (for Marib Alyn-Claire)	1019 SW 10th Ave Apt 508 97205	susanm@trilenium.com

~~Testimony by: MARIAN DRAKE~~
Testimony by: MARIAN DRAKE

1 This conversation is 99% male.
2 We do not need politically motivated shelters, which don't happen til after July 2016. The 10 year/End Homelessness plan

3 We need housing

CAT Marian's testimony at City Council Housing Emergency meeting, 100715, and to the Oregonian (anonymously) Jeff Manning.

Failed so will pass.

4 Airbnb is allowing city regulations, avoiding lodging taxes, and has already effectively removed thousands of affordable apartments.

I am a long time member of the Community Alliance of Tenants.

5 Read - I'm in favor of Required mixed use housing development with 10% very low income, non-subsidized housing.

I rent an apartment in the North Tabor Neighborhood, in a building I like a lot. (I have no complaints, except that the building manager is extremely disagreeable) and she fires some of our favorite employees or runs them off. So far, I stay out of her way, and she leaves me alone. But living under this person makes me a little nervous, due to the "no cause eviction" law in Oregon.)

6 What is so called "affordable housing?" We need very low cost, non-subsidized housing.

I moved from a previous address in the Buckman Neighborhood due to lack of safety at night due to a dark, winding outdoor staircase to my unit; also because of a neighbor tenant and manager harassment; lack of support and threats of eviction by manager when I complained of the neighbor; and piles of garbage in the yard. That previous was a Reach Community Development apartment.

7 Commissioner Houch wants to bring in the Federal Court. We also need reform at the state level - pre-empt pre-emps many options the local governments potential rental protections such as banning no cause evictions.

"Extreme Rent Burden" - Justin/CAT

When I moved from Buckman Neighborhood to North Tabor, I began receiving Section 8. I've lived here over 12 years. When I moved in, my rent was 30% of my income. I thought that was how Section 8 worked -- 30% or no higher than 33% of income. Home Forward now tells me that a tenant's portion of Section 8 can go AS HIGH AS 80% of their income!

The rent in my present apartment has steadily gone up. Raises once or twice a year. Now I pay 36% of my income for rent. I receive \$815 a

"Rent Burden" - Justin/CAT

187380

month Social Security Retirement. In 2014 my share of the rent went up \$87 a month. My Social Security for 2014 went up \$15 a month. And of course we all know that everything in life keeps going up, up, up in price. Food particularly. Except Social Security. In three recent years, Social Security had NO cost of living raises. For 2016, there will be no raise.

The building I live in is legally a "tax building." I do not know exactly what that means, but I do know that it's legally designated as a "low income building." But a one bedroom apartment here now costs almost \$900 a month. This is for low income people? I think not.

A AP
Head guy

Each property individually

187380

Small increases - Not more than 5% a year,
which is on the high end

Israel Bygg

Housing Minister
of 1st Congress
Church downtown

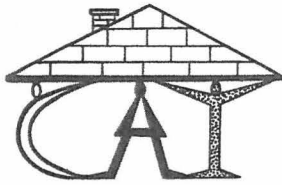
Recognition of a State of Emergency
Need permission for people/institutions
to open their buildings to shelter

Justin
Executive Director of CAT = Best speaker

Landlords
Multi-family
NW
"Over 5 units" (subject to ~~laws~~ laws)
Renovate

The ~~good~~ Landlord
Wayne Stallard
he doesn't raise rent to just ~~rent~~
\$10,000
90 day notice at 5% rent increase
"15% avg rental increase = highest with the nation"
Saltzman says, he's the housing commissioner

Marion Drake
submitted
Oct 7, 2015



187380

Community Alliance of Tenants

2710 NE 14th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97212

My name is Justin Buri, Executive Director of the Community Alliance of Tenants, Oregon's only statewide, grassroots, tenant-let, renters' rights organization. With over 1000 tenant members, our mission is to educate, organize and empower Oregon tenants to demand and obtain safe, stable and affordable housing. Low-income tenants - predominantly low-wage workers, families with children, people living with disabilities, seniors and people of color - are CAT's primary membership base.

In Portland, and the rest of Oregon, tenants face housing injustice in the form of increasing rents, discrimination, unsafe living conditions, and the constant threat of retaliation or eviction. Portland is one of the most gentrified cities in the nation and has among the highest rates of rent increases and no-cause evictions. Landlords and developers issuing such evictions and dramatically raising rents are forcing responsible and reliable tenants out of housing, into one of the worst rental markets in history, without considering of the impact on the individual tenants, or our community. Portland's unprecedented low vacancy rate gives landlords more power over tenants, increasing incidents of discrimination and retaliation. These conditions make it easy for a landlord to refuse when a tenant asks for repairs or demands accounting for erroneous fees and deposit charges. These challenges that renters face, especially rent hikes, evictions, and other forms of displacement, are especially dire for tenants with high barriers, and members of protected classes under the federal Fair Housing Act.

Tenants cannot wait for incremental change. We need bold, courageous action to address this human-made disaster. Building-wide, no-cause evictions are popping up like brush fires across this city, fanning the flames of displacement as our communities continue to bleed. The flood of speculation from Wall Street, corporate landlords, and private investors, buying up buildings to empty them and raise rents, has dire consequences on people's health, economic stability and their children's educational opportunities.

We need real leadership from our Housing Commissioner, our Mayor, and from our City Council. We are in a Renter State of Emergency.

In CAT's 19-year history, we have never seen it this bad. Tenants are in dire distress and in need of immediate relief. Mass evictions of entire buildings, 30-, 50-, even 100-percent rent increases, are impacting our communities, and threatening the social fabric of our city, and there is no end in sight. We can count the number of cranes in the air right now, building more luxury apartments, but how many of those new apartments will be affordable to low-income, or even middle-income tenants? When are we going to recognize that building only market-rate, luxury apartments, will never "trickle-down," to lower income tenants, no matter how many we build, despite all the zoning changes, cash incentives, and sweetheart deals we offer to developers?

How long does this Council think it takes to find a decent apartment in this rental market? How many affordable apartments are available in *your* neighborhoods, likely

with good schools, transportation options, low crime, and neighbors you know and trust?

How long would it take *you* to move, if you received a no-cause termination notice tomorrow?

Now imagine if you had bad credit from a foreclosure, medical debt or student loans. Imagine if you received a no-cause notice after you asked for a repair. Would you put that landlord as a reference on your next rental application?

Imagine you had a criminal record, because you had once been sleeping outside, and arrested from these homeless sweeps. Imagine if you had been racially profiled, or a victim of the racist US War on Drugs, that targets African Americans and people of color.

Imagine if you made minimum wage to support your family, and worked the 72 hours per week it takes to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

Where would you live? Would 30, 60 or even 90 days be enough? In order to move, you have to take days off of work to find a vacancy, pay multiple application fees, hope you are finally accepted, move your family, change your children's school, find a new bus route to work, pay the deposit, first and last month's rent, pay the movers, clean the house, and pray you get even a fraction of your deposit back.

How long would that process take for you? Is 30, 60 or 90 days enough? Do you have money in your savings to do that? For the majority of tenants, the answer is no.

Low income tenants, people of color, people with disabilities, working families making poverty wages, and seniors in a fixed income are being told, "if you don't like it, move," which really means, "you are no longer welcome to live in this city."

Tenants are tired and in distress. Tired of moving, tired of our homes making us sick, tired of paying over half of our income on rent. Tenants are tired of being silenced, out of fear of retribution or a bad reference from their landlord. Tenants are tired being told that our voices, our experiences, our stories, don't matter. Tenants are tired of hearing, "housing will have to wait, we have more important priorities right now."

Tenants make up almost half of Portland's population, and deserve to be heard.

It's time for bold, courageous leadership from our Housing Commissioner, our Mayor, and our City Council. If you want to see examples of leadership, look to Chair Kafoury and the County Board of Commissioners, who have committed to housing every homeless veteran by the end of the year. Look to Governor Kate Brown, who helped champion \$62 million for housing in her first year. Look to Speaker Tina Kotek, who

fought to include tenants with Section 8 as a protected class under the Fair Housing Act, and fought to include rentals in this year's Inclusionary Zoning bill, which ultimately died in the Senate.

If you want to see examples of real courage, look to all the renters that are here today, despite the fear of retaliation from their landlord when they speak out.

It's time to recognize that Portland is not livable, equitable, nor sustainable, when tenants are being pushed out of their homes. It's time to recognize that housing is a human right, and should not be left to the under-regulated free market. It's time to prioritize the needs of all Portland residents, not just the landlords, investors, tech companies like AirBnB, and developers. It's time to prioritize people over profit, and recognize that everyone who lives here has a right to this city.

We can no longer wait for incremental change, or accept the bread crumbs that are thrown to us, so we can count us as a win. If the intent of this 90-Day Proposal, is to act as the first step and building block to real change, and have the commitment of this Housing Commissioner, Mayor and Council, of enacting real immediate change, then we can support it. If the intent of this 90-Day proposal is to say that you all have done something, and go back to business as usual, then we cannot support it.

We are calling for a moratorium or suspension of no-cause terminations for one year, and to increase the notice period of rent increases over 5% of rent, from the current 30 days, to one year. 30-, 60-, or even 90-days' notice is not enough, either to move quickly or absorb a shocking rent increase, especially in today's disaster-like housing crisis.

We will no longer accept that your hands are tied due to explicit or implicit preemptions on Oregon state law. If that is the case, then demonstrate the courage and leadership necessary to either change them or challenge them. The Supreme Court of the United States has reaffirmed disparate impact under the Fair Housing Act.

Both the City of Portland and the State of Oregon are currently compiling their Analysis of Impediments to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. Evictions, rent hikes, displacement, and substandard housing are fair housing issues, and should be treated as such. These unjust laws and policies should be challenged, just as the landlords will challenge this modest, meager proposal.

Tenants can no longer wait, for our Housing Commissioner, Mayor, and City Council to act. We need bold, courageous leadership in this human-made disaster. We are in a Renter State of Emergency.

Thank you.

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Marih Alyn-Claire <malynclaire@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 07, 2015 9:54 AM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony
Subject: Fw: Tenants of the City of Portland in a State of Emergency due to Extreme Rent-hikes

I forgot to include my phone # on the E-mail below.

Marih Alyn-Claire
 503-9950250

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Marih Alyn-Claire <malynclaire@yahoo.com>
To: "cctestimony@portlandoregon.gov" <cctestimony@portlandoregon.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2015 2:52 AM
Subject: Tenants of the City of Portland in a State of Emergency due to Extreme Rent-hikes

Dear Members of the City Council:

My name is Marih Alyn-Claire. I reside at 10253 SE Bell Ave, Portland Oregon, 97222.
 I am a native Oregonian, disabled and a senior on a fixed income.

This year my market-rate apartment rent increased by \$75/month costing over 50% of my income. I also incur an additional \$55-\$60 dollars per month in water, sewage and garbage expenses. These expenses come before electric, heat, phone, medical, dental and other household necessities.

In the past 4 months my landlord informed me that my rent will spike up at least 3-4 hundred dollars per month due to "market forces" when my lease ends in May 2016. I only found out about this because of a rumor circulating, so I wrote to management and received written confirmation.

Shocked and in total disbelief that this could possibly be happening in Portland Oregon, with such across the board heavy increases at once, surpasses any rental trend I've ever witnessed here.

I too in the past have been a landlord. My experience here is that Portland property owners had always maintained a sense of **fairness** and **humane** relationships with their renters. In fact landlords in the past wanted stable tenants, who remained in place, took care of their apartments, paid their rent on-time and brought a sense of community value.

Now, property owners seem not to care at all about PEOPLE—only profits. People whose lives are ripped apart when they suddenly can no longer afford to live anywhere in Portland.

No-Cause, financial evictions have become the new Portland way of doing business. Dump your 5, 6 10 year loyal stable tenant: families, students, single parents, seniors and people with disabilities and quickly replace them with big income tenants from out of town. This new devil may-care, callousness has set-into the Portland business culture. Never mind that the locals are left *priced out, with no where to go*. "That's not our problem, they can just move somewhere else".

So where do you want us to go: sleep in the parks, on the sidewalks, in doorways, line I-5 with seniors in wheel chairs and walkers, have children and parents sleeping in their cars along the city streets?

I'm asking myself, "What impact might these proposed notifications have on the **2 basic categories of renters:** *Temporary* and *Permanent*?"

The **temporary renter** will eventually move out of the rental market into home ownership.

Within the **permanent renter** category are **middle and lower income renters**.
 The *60 day-90 day notification proposal* offered here may be of some benefit to the middle income

permanent renters but is more or less *meaningless* to those **low income tenants who represent the first casualties of this rent-hike debacle.**

Lower income renters cannot financially withstand extreme fluctuations in rent prices because their wages are already too low. They are struggling to make ends meet to begin with on a low fixed income such as seniors and people with disabilities receiving social security. All that is left for this group are 1 yr - 5 yr waiting list for low income replacement housing. They were already maxed out and now priced out of market-rate rents all together.

We need a ***Emergency Displacement Contingency Plan***

- 1) **We need a moratorium on rent increases.** Stop the financial blood sucking of renters by property owners. Many have already over-charged tenants enough rent to cover 10 years of increases. money hungry
- 2) **We need Temporary Emergency Housing-** where are we going to put people who are either displaced or are already displaced? about to be
- 3) **As renters we want to be at the table and part of the discussion.**
- 4) **Establish a Displaced Tenants Fund:** covering relocation/moving expenses, furniture sheltering costs etc. storage, pet
- 5) **Allow Section 8 voucher rules to be adjusted** so that tenants who have vouchers won't lose them while waiting for permanent housing to come available.
- 6) **Prioritize Displaced Tenants placing them at the top of low in-come housing wait- lists.**

Long Term:

- 7) **Increase funding of affordable wage- based housing** so that permanent renters can maintain affordability and long term housing stability.
- 8) **Use a common sense approach to prices on rental housing.** Slow down this run-away train on rent increases by putting caps on incremental increases. Restore reasonable market- prices that everyday working people with families can afford.

Ask our selves, "Do we really want to co-create a market environment in the city of Portland whereby the unopposed exploitation of renters is allowed and only wealthy out-of towners can rent market-rate Portland Metro apartments?"

Let's restore sanity and humanity back into the market-rate rental business community. Let's return a sense of value and livability to Portland renters, honoring all of our citizens at every income level with safe, stable, clean and affordable housing opportunities.

I appreciate your time and attention to this very important matter. Thank You.

Sincerely.

Marih Alyn-Claire
tenantspricedout.com

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Cyndi White <moore.family.love@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2015 12:59 PM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony
Subject: Agenda Items: 1028 and 1029

To whom it may concern,

This email is in regards to : 1028 and 1029

I would like to bear my testimony on the rental crisis we're experiencing in our communities. I'm currently raising a young family and previously could rent a 2 bedroom apartment for \$725 in Tigard Oregon on just one income of \$11.25 an hour. However over the past year or so that same apartment now costs a minimum of \$985 - \$1,150 and while I and many others are willing to just suck it up and cut back on buying food or other necessities to avoid the stress of moving, the rental companies are not allowing this. If you don't make 2 & 1/2 - 3x the amount of rent, you're out. So many have gone homeless or moved in with other relatives who've then received notices for having too many tenants in one apartment or home. With the increase in rent, there was not also a parallel and equal increase in income and once you have an eviction or gap in rental history it becomes nearly impossible to find that extra kind soul to give you another chance and therefore the homeless cycle persists as our children and community as a whole suffer.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to seeing steady progress being made in addressing this heart breaking all consuming issue which affects us all.

-Cynthia White.

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Hannah Stromberg <hannah.stromberg@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2015 12:28 PM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony
Subject: testimony on housing agenda item 1028

City council should adjust this item to require 90 day notice on rent increases 5% or higher and limit rent increases 5% and higher to once per 12 month period.

Otherwise landlords will just game the system and find loop holes but 10% and above is too watered down from the CAT proposal and with many of us paying 50% of our income to rent this would still allow landlords to take another 10% and push us into homelessness.

Hannah Stromberg

From: Nova <nova@riseup.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2015 12:24 PM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony
Subject: State of Emergency Agenda Item for Housing Crisis (Testimony)

Hello Council,

I oppose Saltzman and Hales proposal as it is written as the protections offered are weak. I encourage city council to follow the proposal made by Community Alliance of Tenants and to:

- Start enforcement of short term rental ordinance and levy fine on Airbnb
- Increase local transient lodging tax by 1% and earmark the revenue to affordable housing and housing priced for the middle class
- Increase BDS fines for rental properties and shorten timeframe for corrections by property owner
- Require all no cause evictions also be served a copy to Portland Housing Authority so no cause evictions can be tracked
- Allocate TIF funds and more urban renewal funds to affordable housing
- Modify PDC's budget and put more money into housing
- Limit Comprehensive Plan scope so it doesn't turn more neighborhoods into gentrified condo corridors which displace renters

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Hannah Stromberg <hannah.stromberg@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2015 12:18 PM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony
Subject: Testimony on Housing Emergency (1029)

Hello City Council,

I am a single working mother with one child and I live in Northeast Portland and have lived here for over five years. In the last three years my rent has went up nearly 10-15% per year and my landlord he does almost no maintenance and whenever I request repairs he threatens more rent increases.

Unfortunately, Oregon courts almost always side with landlords and retaliation is hard to prove so here I am in a rental that is overpriced and poorly maintained.

It feels like not only do landlords have the upper hand in terms of Landlord / Tenant law but the legislature refuses to act year after year on rent control and inclusionary zoning because they have sold out to lobbies.

Our lawmakers will hold a emergency session to give tax breaks to Nike but not to address a statewide housing crisis.

Council I have seen Community Alliance of Tenants and Street Roots proposals on temporary relief for this housing crisis and I think both are sensible and fair.

I have seen Dan Saltzman's proposal and I think it is diluted and will not protect many renters. Many of us are already paying over 50% of our income on rent alone so under Saltzman's model landlords could keep increasing 10% a year if this happens many of us will be homeless next year.

I encourage council to follow CAT's well researched proposal and not Saltzman's and Mayor Hales.

We need bold protections not weak ones! We need city council to finally stand up for renters.

In closing I would also ask City Council to add a provision to fine landlords at the local level for violating certain housing codes in rental units and direct BDS to prioritize inspections in rental units.

I would also ask council to set aside more urban renewal money for work force priced housing. Many of us do not qualify for "affordable housing" because you have to be on welfare or poor. We need housing priced for the work force not priced only for the poor and the affluent. We need middle class housing prices.

Finally I would ask City Council to get serious about enforcing short term rental rules. Mayor Hales gave Airbnb a free pass and many Airbnb listings violate city

code and have absolute impunity. I would ask City council enforce the law but also add a new tax to short term rentals and transient lodging and earmark that for "work force" priced housing.

187380

We need solutions... Not watered down ideas from Saltzman who is tied to developers.

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Rosalie N <rosalie.nowalk@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2015 11:12 AM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony
Subject: Written testimony for Items 1028 and 1029 heard on Oct 7
Attachments: My story-Rosalie Nowalk-Oct 7 agenda items 1028-1029 written testimony.docx

Hi,

I have attached my written testimony I would like submitted into the record for consideration when discussing Agenda Items 1028 and 1029 at the October 7, 2015 city council meeting.

Thanks,
Rosalie Nowalk, renter
503-997-9079

SUBMITTED TESTIMONY REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS 1028 and 1029

Wednesday, October 7, 2015, 2 p.m. Time Certain

By: **Rosalie Nowalk, renter in the City of Portland, Oregon**
1936 SW Iowa, Portland, OR 97239
6327 SW Capitol Hwy Ste C, Portland, OR 97239 – mailing address
503-997-9079 -- cell
rosalie.nowalk@gmail.com

NO MORE NO CAUSE!

PART 1: Summer 2014

If you would have told me the situation I'd be in in the years so close to the American Dream of retirement, I would have not believed you. I would have said that could NEVER happen. I would have kept the path I was on, thinking landlords really DO appreciate a good tenant and of course want to provide them with a decent living experience at a reasonable cost.

But it's true. I'm living on shaky ground ... and it's not because of no earthquake.

I'm living in a place slated for ruin. At some yet to-be-announced time in the not too distant future, the rental home I'm living in now will be bulldozed and I will be searching once again for a place to live. Who cares that it's considered a "good deal" for a rental property here in Portland, Oregon, if it can be taken from you at any time? That's WHY it's a good deal, I guess. Unfortunately, after what I had gone through before landing here, I felt I had to snatch it up quick. There weren't too many places available within my price range, and those that were didn't last long enough to even hand in an application.

How did I get here? I'm in this predicament all because of the prevalence of **No-Cause Terminations** in the State of Oregon.

After taking a four and a half year hiatus from Oregon, I came back in 2014, not realizing the troubles that would be in store for me a little over a month after I'd returned. I found what I thought would be a good place to settle in for a while in the Montavilla neighborhood of Portland. The rent was a little steeper than I was really wanting to pay, but at least I found something and I could soon set up my office and get back to work as a realtime captioner.

I moved in on the 6th of July. On the 31st of July, I received an envelope in the mail from my landlady. In it I was surprised to find a No-Cause Termination to our rental agreement. Because it was a month-to-month agreement, the letter told me that this was my 30-days' notice to get out.

No reason given. Just move along, little renter. Move along.

There was absolutely NO regard to the disruption this would cause me to have to pack up, try to find a place in just 30 days, and bear the burden, emotionally and financially, for another move so soon after I'd moved in.

Being who I am, I thought, THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT! How can I be told to leave when I'd just got there – AND FOR NO REASON?

My landlady wouldn't communicate with me. I feel if she hadn't had the handy-dandy option of a No-Cause Termination on her side, maybe she and I COULD have actually talked things through. But she didn't have to bother. She knew, in the hot rental market Portland was in the midst of, that she could have another renter within a day of posting an ad. She wouldn't be hurting one bit.

But I would be.

I thought I should try to get some justice, so I went to court to see if I could at LEAST get my moving expenses reimbursed – about \$300. I also thought it was **my duty** to take the issue to court so that some light could be shone on the wrongness of what the landlady had done. That kind of power over a renter, I felt, was unfair.

I had no idea, back in the summer of 2014, and having just moved back to the state, that there were hundreds, thousands of people going through the same crap as I was – and worse! But at the time, I felt so alone. I felt I had nowhere to turn. I just knew that a wrong had been done and I couldn't let it happen without doing something!

Long story short: I lost the case and ended up having an eviction on my record. Here I was, a 59-year-old woman with excellent credit and great references with an eviction? For no reason? I felt like a criminal. I knew that now I would have not just limited choices for living arrangements, but NO choice in a place to live. Nobody wants you with an eviction on your record. I was pretty scared.

In order to get the eviction dismissed (I REALLY wanted my freedom back!) my attorneys (yes, my attorneys) said I could pay all the landlady's "inflated" attorneys' fees and costs, which amounted to almost \$8,000 (finally "discounted" down to \$5,500). So I did pay. I had no choice if I wanted to be free to live where I wanted to live and not be relegated to the fringes of society or maybe even homelessness.

I lost the case because it was a month-to-month agreement and the judge plainly stated the reason: The landlady did nothing wrong because, legally, all anyone had to do was give 30 days' notice of their intent to vacate ... or their intent to tell you to get out. Don't even need a reason. Don't even need a cause.

Just get along little renter. Get along.

**No-Cause Terminations should be illegal.
NO MORE NO CAUSE!**

* * * * *

PART 2: One year later, September 2015

This little renter did “get along” – angry and thousands of dollars poorer. Feeling betrayed by the legal system too. What the landlady had done was clearly not right, but the way things are set up in Oregon, the renter is the underdog when it comes to rights.

My old landlady had her duplex re-rented quick as a flash, while I struggled to find something affordable before anyone else claimed it. I ended up renting a place that is slated to be torn down. I took it with the hope that I’d at least get a year or so before I was displaced again. It makes me tired just to think about having to move again.

I’ve been lucky so far. This landlord seems like a good one. He doesn’t invade my privacy like the previous landlord did (among other things), and the rent isn’t bad, considering the location.

After my being here a year, my landlord emailed me with good news. His plans for developing the property were not following the timeline he had hoped (said he was running into roadblocks with the city), and he notified me that I would “probably” have another year in the place before things start happening and I’d have to leave.

I felt relieved because I knew I had a good deal, relatively speaking. In just the year since I’d been booted out of my duplex, rents had climbed even higher, whole families were being displaced, and Portland seemed to be under invasion by one class of people: Those with property, money, and ... influence. Everyone else was being pushed out farther and farther and paying more and more for less and less. **Or had become homeless.**

However, the week after receiving the good news email from my landlord, he emailed me again -- this time saying he was **raising my rent 15%** starting November 1. He said that he was making a “legitimate rent increase” that was more in line with the market.

Although the 15% number made me jump when I read the email (yet another hindrance to saving for retirement or my own place), what really struck me was this landlord’s use of the word “legitimate.” I thought, what an odd word to use when bringing the hammer down on a renter with an enormous rent increase. I wondered how another human being could think so coldly when it comes to a person’s shelter. I questioned whether maybe I was just reading the meaning of the sentence wrong.

So I looked up the word.

LEGITIMATE: *adjective*

1. according to law; lawful:

2. in accordance with established rules, principles, or standards.

Aha. So he was only doing what he could rightly get away with.

I REALLY hate it that my need for shelter is looked at as a money-making investment to line the pockets of those who have plenty as it is. There HAS to be a limit to this! **I didn't get a 15% raise this year.** Most people haven't received a raise in years!

So even though my landlord may have given me a "legitimate" rent increase, in that it wasn't violating any laws or rules, it seems it's a one-way benefit to the property owner, and it lacks this very important consideration:

THE HEALTH OF OUR CITY.

This kind of housing policy, where one group of people (property owners, developers, investors) can take total advantage of another group of people (renters), is unjust, unfair, and does nothing to promote the happiness and peaceful living of the residents of Portland, Oregon.

There will be lots of good suggestions for the council to consider at the meeting October 7 regarding renter protections. Please, when you do, don't think only of what you cannot do or dare not do. Think of what you **MUST** do. It's past time.

The people are hurting.