

Dear ROA Members,

Based on the concerted effort by organized tenant groups, mostly in the Portland area, to institute rent controls, it has become apparent that we need to communicate our position directly to our elected officials prior to the start of the 2016 Legislative session in February. Our Legislative Director, Jim Straub & our Lobbyist Shawn Miller are working tirelessly on their end, but they need our help to drive home these concepts.

Here are some points which will help to make your personalized letter to your Senator and Representative more meaningful. Please rewrite these points in your own words so that each letter received by the elected official does not appear to be a photocopied form letter.

- **Rents were low for many years.**

There were many years where the occupancy rates of our rental units dropped and we had to lower rents significantly to get them rented. There were times where we were not able to meet our mortgage payments and operating expenses including taxes and insurance and needed to supplement these investments to remain above water. We are now just about at break even.

- **There are more renters and less buyers.**

We noticed that as the economic crisis of 2008 hit, there were many more renters looking for housing than before. Many explained that they had lost their homes to foreclosure. Also we have noticed many more college grads applying for rentals than in years past. Some of them have confided that they have not been able to get jobs with good enough pay to be able to afford to buy a starter home. Also, many have indicated that they owe too much money on their college loans to be able to qualify for a mortgage.

- **A no-cause termination is better for a tenant than an eviction.**

We sometimes have problems with tenants' bad behavior where we really don't want to evict them through the FED process because that would leave a mark on their records and interfere with their renting or buying in the future. However, we have been told that there is a push to eliminate the no cause eviction process which would leave no alternative but to evict through the courts.

- **All expenses are continuing to increase, a rent freeze is unfair and unjust.**

All of our property taxes have gone up right along with all the operating expenses. Now that there is more demand for rental housing we have been able to bring rents more in line with our actual expenses and reasonable return on investment objectives. We have been informed by our Rental Owners Association that there is pending legislation to limit rent increases to 5% in any year. That would be quite

unfair. What other industry has a regulation on what they can charge for their product, i.e., car dealer, furniture sales, or any other service or commodity...NONE.

- **Please exclude the small property owners.**

We are not great big corporate interest property owners. We worked hard, scrimped and saved to buy XX rental units with the sweat of our brow to provide us with a retirement income. We are afraid that we small time rental owners are going to get caught up in proposed legislation which is likely targeted at big conglomerate Wall Street interests. Please be extremely careful to exclude all but the very largest property owner conglomerates from your legislation...or better yet just say no.

- **Address the real issue – Lack of housing.**

We are also told that there are land use issues being mixed together with trying to stifle free market rental investment. Please be sure to separate these issues. We did not cause a lack of housing for rental prices to rise and we feel as frustrated as everyone else by our inability to do anything about it. Please don't use us, the small scale rental property owners, as the scapegoat.

- **We are everyday regular people – not large companies.**

One of the most threatening issues proposed by the tenant groups would be for landlords to in some way be responsible to pay tenant relocation expenses if no-cause 30 day notices remain in effect. Again, if the problem is with large Wall Street type real estate conglomerates, leave us small time rental property investors out of it.

- **More regulation and rent control equals less rental units.**

Finally, the proposals offered by tenant groups, if enacted by the legislature, will in the long run hurt tenants more. Rental property owners will be forced to increase rents enough to offset more out of pocket expense and I don't think that unintended consequence will bode well with anyone, tenant or rental property owner. All the proposals the legislature is considering which are unfair to landlords who provide needed housing in Oregon, will ultimately lead to less rental units --- further exacerbating the affordable housing problem.

We encourage the Oregon Legislature to focus on the means to remove road blocks that prevent investors from building. This would encourage builders to look at all aspects of the housing market, including low income housing.

Sincerely,