

# THE TENANT



**ISSUE #7. October, 2025**

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## **We Are All Riviera**

By: Samuel P.

Forty-two weeks ago, the handful of people involved in what was then Boise Tenants United set a New Years' resolution: to form the first fighting, supermajority tenants' union in Idaho's history. At the time we had very little idea of what that meant, and even less of how to get there. Now, nearly one year and many hundreds (or thousands) of hours of work later, we have achieved that goal.

The Riviera Estates Tenants Union, launched on Saturday, October 25th, represents 32 of 38 occupied units as of writing, 84% of the entire park. Organized largely in response to the actions of a new landlord, Demetre Booker Jr. of Elevate Commercial, residents have unionized in the face of an effective 40% rent hike, harassment and displacement, and a general policy of gentrification.

It's difficult for me to write about the experience of building this union without becoming emotional; every Treasure Valley Tenants Union (TVTU) organizer who has had the privilege of visiting with the residents of Riviera Estates has seen first-hand their courage, dignity, and determination to defend their community against this offensive by their new landlord. It has been profoundly inspiring to help these members of our broader community in the Treasure Valley to organize to exercise the power which is in their hands.

My hope is that everyone reading this, following us on social media, or viewing the launch via local media can take away one fundamental

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lesson; there is power in the union, and where the working-class has power, there is hope.

For too long we have slavishly appealed to ‘representatives’ beholden to corporate interests invested in translating our labor, rent, and basic needs into profit. By what right does the landlord class extract tens of thousands of dollars from us to pad their pockets and achieve record profits? By what rationale do the working people of our state tolerate ever-worsening impoverishment and political disempowerment?

I would say simply there is no rationale, and no right which justifies this bankrupt system. It is time for working Idahoans to stand up, to say enough is enough. Ours are tumultuous times. A better world is possible, but only when we organize and demand a system by working people, for working people. TVTU and working-class tenants have no need for parasitic, corporate landlordism. Join us for working-class power, for hope and dignity, and for a better world.

Riviera Estates is just the beginning, and in our shared struggle we are all Riviera. Treasure Valley Tenants Unite!

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## **A Call to Organizing**

By: Charlotte Strayer

I do not have to describe the feeling of despair that looms over everything, I’m sure you feel it whenever you open your phone. Before I began organizing, I knew it well. The overload of discouraging information, and nothing to do to curb it, no way to feel involved in the betterment of my community. In February, I found Boise Tenants



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United (now Treasure Valley Tenant's Union), and began involving myself. Since then, I have participated to my fullest ability, and in that time, despite events in my personal life, I have left behind the despair I used to carry with me.

As an organizer, I speak to people I never would've otherwise. Tenants who have lived in more states than I could ever recall, tenants who have lived lives and told stories I hope to remember forever, tenants I will hold with me as long as I live. None of these people are people I would stop to talk to in the grocery store or a coffee shop, but because of tenant organizing, I have had conversations that have shaped my worldview in ways only human-human connection can.

Tara Raghuveer, one of the founders of KC Tenants, and the Tenant Union Federation, says: "If there is any hope, it lives in the tenant union". Not only have I seen how the tenant union builds hope for the tenants involved, I have seen how it can build hope for organizers. We are all keenly aware of the rapid descent of our country into facism, and it is easy to lose faith in our neighbors and ourselves. With organizing, we build confidence in the capabilities of those around us, and ourselves as competent servicemen in the fight for the world we want.

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## **Lisa Sánchez for Boise City Council**

By: Spenser McGaughey

Treasure Valley tenants Union is proud to announce that we have endorsed Lisa Sánchez in her race for Boise City Council in District 6. If elected, Sánchez would be the only renter on the city council, and she



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has a proven record of fighting for Boise tenants. She served on the city council from 2017-2023, and she used that time to fight for protections for tenants. She pushed for and passed an ordinance in the city council that capped rental application fees at \$30. She then defended this ordinance against the state legislature, which tried to overturn the ordinance in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, Sánchez' landlord would not let her renew her lease, a story many Boise tenants know. She was forced to move, and she inadvertently moved out of her district, and was forced off of the council as a result. In 2024, after Sánchez was forced off of the council, the state legislature succeeded in nullifying her rental fee application ordinance, as well as other ordinances that protected Boise tenants. While other City Council members are content to allow the state legislature to trample them, Sánchez has vowed to continue to fight for Boise tenants if elected. Please consider supporting her campaign! Reach out to our email address to find out how to get involved.



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## **Out-of-State Investors Deepen Idaho's Housing Crisis**

By: Anonymous TVTU Member

### **A City Under Pressure**

Boise, once known for its relative affordability and tight-knit neighborhoods, has become a symbol of America's housing crisis. Over



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the past decade, the Treasure Valley has experienced unprecedented population growth, soaring home prices, and a widening gap between wages and rent. While local officials cite a lack of supply and rapid in-migration as major causes, an increasingly visible culprit is reshaping the market: out-of-state investors.

## **From Homes to Assets**

Local investigations by BoiseDev uncovered that hundreds of Treasure Valley single-family homes are now owned by corporate landlords and investor groups headquartered far from Idaho. Companies like American Homes 4 Rent (AMH)—a national real estate trust based in Nevada—have purchased or built entire neighborhoods of rental homes in Boise, Meridian, Kuna, and Star. Developments like American Star in Star, Idaho, feature more than 200 single-family homes designed exclusively for rent, not sale.

This shift represents a profound transformation: the conversion of Boise's housing stock from places to live into financial instruments. For institutional investors, houses are assets to generate returns; for Boise residents, they're increasingly unattainable necessities.

## **Rising Rents and Reduced Stability**

When out-of-state corporations enter local housing markets, they bring deep pockets and profit-driven management strategies. During the pandemic, KBOI and KTVB both documented how cash-heavy buyers from other states flooded into Boise, outbidding local residents and accelerating price inflation. Once acquired, investor-owned properties

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are typically rented at market-maximized rates, which drives overall rent benchmarks upward.

Tenants in these investor-controlled communities often face higher application fees, stricter lease terms, and less responsive maintenance practices. As City Cast Boise reported, many renters feel “trapped in a corporate maze,” unable to contact a local manager or negotiate terms. The sense of neighborhood belonging—once a hallmark of Boise living—erodes when absentee owners and algorithmic rent adjustments replace personal relationships.

## **Commodification and the Loss of Home**

The problem goes beyond Boise’s borders. Nationally, investors now account for roughly a quarter of all single-family home purchases, according to CoreLogic. This trend reflects a growing commodification of housing, where shelter—an essential human need—is treated primarily as a speculative asset.

When homes are traded like stocks, the logic of the market overrides the logic of community. Investors seek to maximize returns, not to stabilize neighborhoods or house families affordably. In Boise, this commodification manifests in higher rents, displaced residents, and a shrinking stock of owner-occupied housing. The result is a two-tiered system: a small group profits from property, while many residents struggle to maintain secure housing in their own city.



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## **The Human Cost**

For renters, the consequences are immediate. Corporate landlords can adjust rents en masse, leaving tenants with few options in a tight market. Meanwhile, the dream of homeownership—long part of Boise’s cultural identity—slips further away. As wages stagnate and property values soar, younger residents are forced into long-term rental dependency, enriching investors who may never set foot in Idaho.

## **Reclaiming Housing as a Public Good**

The City of Boise’s 2024 Housing Needs Analysis outlines a clear need for thousands of additional affordable units, but it also underscores a deeper issue: who gets to own and control the city’s future housing stock. Without policies that curb speculative ownership or prioritize local control, the city risks becoming a “rental economy” dominated by distant corporations.

Addressing Boise’s housing crisis, therefore, isn’t only about building more homes—it’s about redefining what homes are for. If housing continues to be treated as a commodity, market forces will keep prioritizing profit over people. But if the community and policymakers treat housing as a right and a cornerstone of civic life, Boise can begin to restore balance and reclaim its neighborhoods from speculative capital.

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## TENANT RESOURCES

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[www.wrest.coop](http://www.wrest.coop)
- Intermountain Fair  
Housing Council  
[www.ifhcidaho.org](http://www.ifhcidaho.org)
- Idaho Legal Aid  
[www.idaholegalaid.org](http://www.idaholegalaid.org)
- Boise Mutual Aid  
[instagram.com/boisem  
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