Affordable Housing – Everyone is a Tenant

Hi, my name is Ryan A. Farmer, and I'm running for Portland City Commissioner. Welcome to my home in the void. The void is great – it's quiet, spacious, formless and eternal, plus...

It's free real estate.

But it isn't really free real estate, because it's not real estate. It's the formless void. Hard for most people to live here, or even keep their sanity while visiting.

So, if you aren't a lovecraftian horror from outside time or an ethereal being unbound to reality, you might need something more conventional to live in, like a house or an apartment. Which you are going to have to pay for, because space costs money. If you live somewhere, you are subject to the cost of housing. Whether you rent an apartment or own a house, whether you have a mortgage or share costs with a roommate, whether you live alone or live with your family, you are subject to the cost of housing. We are all tenants because we all live somewhere.

Now, being a landlord is different. You have extra property, a small piece of the world that you aren't personally using. You *can* use it yourself if you want to, or sell it, or even let the bank take it if it's mortgaged and that's what works for you. And, of course, you can always rent it to someone else. Usually for at least the cost to own and maintain it.

Now that's free real estate.

The point here is, as a landlord, you have choices in what you do with your spare land, including choosing to not rent it and so not being a landlord.

A landlord can always choose to not be a landlord, but a tenant can never choose to not be a tenant. This is the ultimate cause of high rent and unaffordable housing. A landlord can always walk away from renting out their extra space, but a tenant can never choose to not live somewhere. We all must have a space, one way or another, but none of us must own extra land.

A landlord can always choose to not be a landlord, but a tenant can never choose to not be a tenant, and because of this difference, our housing system is imbalanced in favor of landlords. To make it work, we must create balance between the needs of landlords and tenants. We can create this balance by scaling rent to income, which will immediately remedy the high cost of rent in Portland.

Unless, of course, you discover a way to live in the infinite darkness outside the universe and between realities. But balancing the needs of landlords and tenants is much easier. My name is Ryan A. Farmer, and as Portland City Commissioner, I'd make sure we create balance between landlords and tenants by scaling rent to income, so no one has to live in this terrifying emptiness. Except for me, of course.