



The Voice of Multifamily Housing Since 1917©

May 17, 2016

Councilmember Gil Cedillo
Chair, L.A. City Housing Committee
L.A. City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Room
Los Angeles, Ca. 90012

Dear Mr. Chairman,

After reviewing your motion regarding the inclusion of "court orders" in LAMC 163.00 we are once again concerned about the aggressive attitude toward owners of residential rental property. Had our organization been consulted on this issue, we would have made other recommendations such as having the City Attorney and/or the City pay relocation fees to qualified tenants of a building that is ordered closed by prosecutors.

Buildings with gang and criminal activity are notorious for being very difficult to manage. Law enforcement agencies tell owners or managers who report criminal activity to simply "evict" the problem tenant(s). These agencies don't understand the nature of the unlawful detainer process – especially in Los Angeles where the rent Stabilization Ordinance comes into play. In many cases, the owner's hands are tied.

When criminals take over a building, either as bad tenants or by force, other residents of the building are reluctant to act as witnesses for fear of being retaliated against by the problem tenant(s). An eviction for nuisance or criminal activity requires a witness. The witness' names are not masked in the complaint and notice; thus, the possibility of retaliation. This is only one example of how the current system makes it difficult for owners to remove criminals from their buildings.

What's more, owners –especially older "mom and pop" operators can become intimidated. Some are afraid to even set foot on their own property. They must not be held fully responsible when the system does not work for them. The City needs to create a separate fund inside the City Attorney's office whereby the prosecutors can assist tenants who are not involved with criminal activity if their building is ordered closed and they are forced to relocate.

Thank you for your consideration.

James B. Clarke
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