

Subject: COUNCIL FILE #14-0268-S13

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To: councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org, councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org, concilmember.krekorian@lacity.org

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Date Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2019 5:22:57 PM GMT-07:00

Date Received: Tuesday, May 7, 2019 5:22:30 PM GMT-07:00

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing regarding the Anti-Tenant Harassment Ordinance, which will be discussed at the Housing Committee meeting May 8 at 3pm. My wife and I have been the victims of harassment in our home for the past couple months, and this ordinance would be a significant resource for us as well as other vulnerable tenants throughout the city.

We share a duplex in Mid-City with our landlady - she lives on one side of the house, and we live on the other. We have been her tenants for 5 years without complaint. In mid-March, we told her the happy news that we are expecting our first child in June. Two weeks later, the harassment began.

We came home to find a letter from her accusing us of smoking in our unit. We were confused; we've NEVER smoked in the house, and certainly wouldn't begin doing so when my wife was 7 months pregnant. We wrote her back saying clearly that no one was smoking or had smoked in the unit, but rather than diffuse the situation, she escalated. We received another letter, much more aggressive, accusing us of smoking and threatening eviction. It became clear through her communications and behavior that she wanted us out, and was going to manufacture just cause to evict.

Throughout the month, we restated the fact that we weren't smoking, and on multiple occasions gave her proof that we weren't. She would not listen to reason, and posted a 3-day Notice to Perform or Move Out, saying if we didn't stop smoking in the unit, she would evict us. We didn't know what to do; we couldn't stop doing something we weren't doing to begin with. We spoke to lawyers and the LA Tenants Union, all of whom told us that she had no case. But that wouldn't stop her from filing for eviction - which would go on our public records, show up on credit reports, and incur court fees, all of which would make it harder for us to find a home of our own. We also knew that with her living next door, she could make our lives extremely uncomfortable. We were already totally stressed, walking on eggshells in our own home. We couldn't sleep, and couldn't concentrate on preparing for the baby. The timing couldn't be worse, or more cruel, for our landlady to contrive an eviction.

Ultimately, we decided that for our health we needed to find another home. We feel very fortunate that we can afford to find a safe alternative - there are many others who are not. The proposed Anti-Tenant Harassment Ordinance would give a much-needed life raft to tenants like us who are vulnerable to cruel, greedy, or vindictive landlords. We hope that you will read our story and put the Housing Committee's support behind this ordinance. The people of this city need this protection, and we need it now.

Thank you,

Philip Leers and Maria Perkovic

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