

Dear Councilwoman Nury Martinez,

I know that legislation regarding home sharing in Los Angeles is on the horizon. So I wanted to take a moment and tell you about how home sharing has impacted me and my family personally. After living in a small 1-bedroom apartment in North Hollywood for 6 years, my husband and I were able to purchase a town home in North Hills in March 2013. We both work from home and own small businesses. So we needed in-home offices and our 3 bedroom town home was the perfect fit for us. It did, however, double our monthly expenses through an increase in mortgage and utilities compared to our apartment.

After a year of slowly dipping into savings to pay our monthly expenses, we were a little worried about our new situation.

But then in February 2014, a friend from Chicago asked if she could come stay with us for a month while she considered moving to Los Angeles. We have a small bonus room that we've made into a guest room and she paid us rent so it worked out really well. The month of living with someone else went very smoothly. So we decided to open our home to visitors and travelers through Air BnB. We have been home sharing for just over a year now and it has made a hugely positive impact on our lives.

As business owners, there aren't more ways we can earn more income. We aren't waiting for a raise from our bosses. We have to *create* ways of making more money ourselves. And home sharing is one way we can earn some passive income. It has made staying in our home more affordable, providing just enough extra income each month for our regular expenses.

It has also impacted our community and neighborhood. As a result we have planted a garden in our entry way since leaving two strips of dirt wasn't very welcoming to our guests. We also created a pamphlet of nearby small businesses that we highly recommend to our guests. Kountry Folks Restaurant is within walking distance from our home and very reasonably priced for a hearty meal. Many of our guests frequent it and mark it as a favorite spot.

Since we have this small bonus room in our home, we are genuinely home sharing, not renting out another unit and taking it off the market for other buyers or renters. And we've heard a lot of positive feedback from our visitors on our location. There aren't many hotel options in our community, so this helps spread out travelers all over the city, instead of overcrowding popular destinations like Hollywood or Beverly Hills. One visitor had an internship at a studio near the Van Nuys Airport. Another couple came down for the weekend from Bakersfield and this was the perfect resting place for them.

As I write this I am listening to a couple from Italy speaking Italian to each other in my living room. As an introvert, that isn't something that would happen to me very easily. But through home sharing we've hosted over 20 guests from as near as North Hollywood to as far as Minsk. It truly is an eye opening experience and has made me proud to host guests in my community and neighborhood. And hopefully one day when we have children, it'll provide a real-life learning experience for them about other people and cultures.

In the end, I hope we are leading to a great first step towards clearer legislation for home sharing and the culture of our city.

Sincerely, Jenny Smith