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As Los Angeles bounds into spring, I am reminded once again why my love for this city stays stoic and why it has become my home for 30+ years. I am fortunate to own a beautiful home; one I love as I would a child and one that hugs me every day as I step past its threshold. I painstakingly renovated it from near rubble. You would say I am house-proud.

A few years back, as the economy fell into a downturn, I ran into financial hard times. The thought of losing my home was more than I could bare. My survival tactics were in full swing and I needed to find a solution. I (reluctantly) became a member of the home sharing community, Airbnb. It was the unknown that had me reluctant. How could I possibly consider bringing a stranger into my home? I had little choice but to jump into the unknown. I opened my home to visitors from all over the world - taking in guests from China, Cyprus, New York, Australia, Germany, Canada, Florida, and Indiana. How is it that this huge world could become so small with the one simple gesture of bringing a stranger into your home? Forward thinking? Not really. Taking strangers into your home has been around for as long as people have travelled. Sharing my home has done so much for me and so much for others, including the merchants in my neighborhood. Not the big box stores, but the small family businesses. I support the neighborhood bakery, dry cleaners, hair salon, yoga studio, and restaurants. I know this to be a fact as these merchants have personally thanked me for sending my guests.

It has been a full 4 years. I have maintained my home. I have upgraded the landscaping, added central A/C, rebuilt rotted driveway gates and hired a housekeeper. But more importantly it has made me a better person. I have learned compassion, patience, empathy and graciousness by the mere act of hosting. Literally opening my doors to the world has made me a proud Angeleno. My personal business has grown and recovered and my financial gain from home sharing is no longer a necessity but rather a pleasure. I look forward to the arrival of a guest: one that arrives as a stranger and leaves as a friend.

Los Angeles home sharers are the best ambassadors this city could ever think possible. Home sharing can and will be the catalyst to change the world.

I challenge city council to weigh out its options. If home sharing were to go underground, the hosts, your constituents, would face a grave danger. I can only imagine the scenarios without the security of a safe service.

Do not let Los Angeles miss a generous opportunity to strengthen its persona - a city of many cultures as diverse as the world itself. This city has much to gain with hosts opening their doors and arms to travelers of all sorts. Think of all of the rewards - quite limitless really.

March 30, 2015

RE: City Council File #14-1635

Dear Honorable Councilmember Mike Bonin:

I am a resident in Mar Vista and a single mother of two and I am writing to ask you to support home sharing. In 2009, I was laid off as a gemologist at a jewelry store at The Grove due to the emergence of e-commerce and people purchasing diamonds and such online now. After being laid off I was falling behind on my mortgage payments so I went to the bank to see if I could get a loan modification. Unfortunately, they could not do that and the banker made the suggestion for me to rent out my rooms to help pay my mortgage. Without this source of income, my children and I would have lost our home.

In addition to home sharing allowing me to save my home, I truly enjoy meeting new people from all over the world. Through home sharing, I've discovered that everyone is simple. We all want the same goals - a safe place, to be healthy, to be happy, and to experience new cultures.

Since I began hosting, many of my guests ask me for suggestions to local businesses and I always recommend local small businesses in Mar Vista. Some of my favorite restaurants that I suggest to my guests are Campos Tacos and Pizza Pizza.

I am aware that there are those against short term rentals, but urge you to support rules that do not ban the practice, but regulate this industry, not only for the benefit of people like me, but also to contribute to LA's economy. My guests consist of mostly families and they are very considerate of our house rules, neighbors and the neighborhood in general.

The ability to share my home allows me to keep my property, and feel happy and secure in the knowledge I can manage my life financially without any other support. Please consider keeping short-term rentals a viable option for homeowners like myself.

Sincerely,

Angelica Campos

cc: Sharon Dickinson