



Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>

Fwd: Housing Committee - Item 5 Source Of Income

1 message

Janet Gagnon <janet@aagla.org>
To: "adam.lid@lacity.org" <adam.lid@lacity.org>

Wed, Jan 23, 2019 at 4:37 PM

Hi Adam,

I'd like to request that this letter be included as part of the record for this item.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Janet M. Gagnon

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Janet Gagnon <janet@aagla.org>
Date: January 22, 2019 at 6:11:57 PM PST
To: "councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org" <councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org>, "councilmember.Krekorian@lacity.org" <councilmember.Krekorian@lacity.org>, "councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org" <councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org>
Cc: Debby Kim <debby.kim@lacity.org>, "matt.hale@lacity.org" <matt.hale@lacity.org>, Julia Gould <julia.gould@lacity.org>, "solomon.rivera@lacity.org" <solomon.rivera@lacity.org>
Subject: Housing Committee - Item 5 Source Of Income

Dear Housing Committee Members,

The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles represents more than 10,000 mom and pop rental housing providers throughout Los Angeles. In October 2018, we hosted a listening session for HUD on the Section 8 program. It was only 1 of 7 listening sessions held nationwide and the only one held in California. What was clear from the event is that mom and pop rental housing providers are not participating in Section 8 because of the systemic flaws contained in the program. These are not minor inconveniences, rather they are substantial delays in payments, a host of confusing new regulations, contracts and processes requiring considerable attorney's fees for assistance as well as the complete absence of help by Section 8 program staff to deal with problem tenants or those suffering with mental health issues. Attached is the list of changes that we created from the listening session and have provided to the HUD Director for Los Angeles Office of Public Housing, Region IX to review and share with HACLA. We encourage the Housing Committee to similarly review this list and obtain changes by HACLA to make the program workable for mom and pop rental housing providers on a voluntary basis.

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles ("HACLA") claims to be "in the process of reviewing several measures to streamline the Housing Choice Voucher program" (aka Section 8). The problem is that so far they have only made minor changes to the program and have failed to address many of the major issues. It was clear from the listening session that the program as administered by HACLA is far behind many other Public Housing Authorities and is the fundamental reason why more rental housing providers in Los Angeles are not voluntarily using the program. In contrast, there were positive comments made about Public Housing Authorities in the City of Glendale and San Bernardino, neither of which have any mandatory Source of Income ordinance. HACLA still fails to institute major changes to make the program more workable for rental housing providers to voluntarily participate in it. There is no mention by HACLA as

to how long it typically takes an owner to get their first month's rent after their initial contact with HACLA. We have heard reports from members that it has taken up to 4 months to receive a first check due to a host of delays by HACLA. How can the City expect small mom and pop rental housing providers to stay in business waiting that long for a rent payment? Mom and pops rely on their property to pay for their own daily living expenses, including medical, food and mortgages. They cannot afford to serve as a free loan service to tenants by being forced to wait weeks or months to receive payment from HACLA. In addition, HACLA provides no help when there is a problem tenant unlike in the 1980s when they would actively assist an owner and, as a result, more owners voluntarily participated in the Section 8 program. Times have changed and now HACLA treats owners as combatants instead of partners. HACLA has stated that they are attempting to "address landlord concerns" yet they have not bothered to discuss this proposed ordinance with AAGLA prior to it being listed on this agenda. How can HACLA fully address, understand or even prioritize rental housing providers' concerns if they refuse to take the time to sit down and talk with us? Lastly, it is a long and tedious process to get the approved RSO increases from HACLA even though they are determined by the City. There is no reason that owners should even have to request this increase from HACLA much less wait for its approval by HACLA to receive it. These are some of the fundamental structural changes that need to be made to the Section 8 program as it is being administered by HACLA before rental housing providers can be expected to participate in it. To do otherwise would simply force more mom and pop rental housing providers out of business resulting in the City losing more rental housing and more tenants losing their homes.

While the Source of Income ordinance as currently described would not technically require owners to accept Section 8 tenants, it is in fact the primary purpose of the new ordinance. In reality, it would function as a requirement since rental housing providers would not be able to reject an applicant based on Section 8 and would have to have some other grounds to do so. Even if other grounds were found, the rental housing provider would be subject to claims of discrimination and have to defend themselves in court and incur substantial attorney's fees. The Section 8 program is fundamentally flawed and rental housing providers should be able to choose not to participate in the program on that basis. HACLA and the City should first focus on fixing the program before trying to force more people into a broken system.

AAGLA supports the Section 8 program and we want to see it improved, so that more rental housing providers are able to use it voluntarily. We stand ready to work with HACLA and HCIDLA on finding solutions to the systemic flaws that currently plague the Section 8 program. However, we again ask that the flaws be fixed **before** the City considers forcing owners into the program by a Source of Income ordinance. To do otherwise would create unmanageable financial burdens on mom and pop rental housing providers that would force them out of business and make the housing crisis in Los Angeles **even worse**.

Sincerely,

Janet M. Gagnon



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2 attachments

 **List of Needed Improvements-10102018 (2).pdf**
96K

 **ATT00001.htm**
1K