

The Honorable Gil Cedillo  
Housing Committee  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring Street, Room 460  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Chairman Cedillo,

On behalf of the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), I write to express support for ensuring that renters, including those with the lowest incomes, have a right to legal counsel in eviction proceedings. The rise of evictions in recent years is deeply troubling, given the long-lasting, destabilizing, and harmful effect of evictions on families and their communities and the severe shortage of affordable rental homes in Los Angeles and across the nation. As the Los Angeles City Council and other local government officials work to end homelessness and housing poverty, I urge you to support measures to provide low income renters with the legal representation they need to prevent evictions and keep families in their homes.

NLIHC is dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes. Our members include state, and local housing coalitions, residents of public and assisted housing, nonprofit housing providers, homeless service providers, fair housing organizations, researchers, public housing agencies, private developers and property owners, local and state government agencies, faith-based organizations, and concerned citizens. While our members include the spectrum of housing interests, we do not represent any segment of the housing industry. Rather, we focus on what is in the best interests of people who receive and those who are in need of federal housing assistance, especially extremely low income people.

The cycle of housing instability and evictions destabilize low income families and their communities, and in worst cases, leads to homelessness. According to NLIHC's report, [The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes](#), the Los Angeles metropolitan area has the second largest shortage of affordable and available rental homes for extremely low income households, with fewer than 17 homes for every 100 of the lowest income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, and other individuals. Four out of every five (81%) extremely low income households in Los Angeles are severely cost burdened, paying at least half of their income on rent, leaving few resources to cover other basic needs, like groceries, medicine, transportation, and childcare.

The severe shortage of affordable rental homes, in turn, puts the lowest income families at higher risk of evictions. Evictions can lead to job loss, disrupt children's education, and negatively impact physical and mental health. Moreover, eviction records often prevent families from accessing the affordable homes needed to climb the economic ladder and achieve financial stability. In this way, many experts now view evictions as not only a condition of poverty, but a cause of it.

I encourage you to support efforts to provide low income families with a right to legal counsel in eviction proceedings. It could make the difference between keeping a family in their home and homelessness.

Sincerely,



Diane Yentel  
President and CEO  
National Low Income Housing Coalition