

Communication from Public

Name: Jennifer Ganata

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 12:25 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Jennifer Ganata and I live in CD 14. I am a public interest attorney, a member of the Los Angeles Tenants Union, member of my building's tenant association, and a born and raised Angeleno. I have lived in my apartment for over 6 years now which is located in Virgil Village/East Hollywood (8 altogether at the property). In that amount of time I have seen the neighborhood I live in change rapidly. My landlord is Rampart Property Management, Inc. and until recently I didn't have much interaction with them. I used to be an eviction defense attorney for several years and periodically I would run into my landlord in court. I knew that my landlord managed and owned many properties in Los Angeles, but other than that I knew very little about my landlord. On June 1, 2020 my neighbors and I let my landlord know that we wouldn't be able to be paying rent due to COVID-related reasons. Although I am an attorney, the cost of living in Los Angeles while trying to do public interest work and manage student debt is pretty difficult. I have to budget pretty carefully in order to over spend my budget. When the pandemic hit things became more difficult even while I still continued to work. Amongst everything that has been going on in the world, I felt my stress level sky rocket. One thing that increased my stress was dealing with my landlord. Since telling my landlord I would be unable to pay rent due to COVID-related reasons he suddenly began to appear at the property more frequently. He began to offer me and my neighbors jobs so we could work for him and pay down our rent. He also began to serve notices to enter the property for inspection. He sent text messages sometimes late into the evening at some points. In emails to me and neighbors he would casually mention things like Ellis evictions and the need to reduce our services such as parking. On one occasion in late June he sent an employee over to the premises to attempt to remove stucco from the building exterior. The employee didn't have any protective gear nor any means for catchment of falling stucco and plaster. There was dust everywhere. As a result I notified HCID, Department of Public Health and the Air Quality Management District. All 3 agencies arrived on the scene and HCID issued a Stop Work Order. After that incident the landlord didn't show up again to repair anything or even speak with us until July 31, 2020. On Friday, July 31, 2020 at 7:30PM my landlord showed up to the

apartment to serve me and my neighbors paperwork which included a seismic retrofit order, notice of renovation of the exterior of the building and a notice to terminate our parking. My neighbors and I are currently in the process of appealing the plans for seismic retrofit. We have asked our landlord for more information as to what type of renovation is being done to the exterior, but have not received any more information. I have since sent in a CPRA request to HCID to get any information regarding the permits. Our largest issue is parking. Our landlord has stated he is terminating our parking because we have not paid rent. Had our parking not been a separate rental agreement and incorporated into the rental agreement I would have a better argument for a reduction of services and retaliation with HCID. However, in this matter I have learned that HCID cannot help me with this instance because it is not under their authority as it is a contract. HCID referred me to DCBA and DFEH. DCBA had told me to go back to HCID and I have since filed a complaint with DFEH. The larger issue here is that my landlord can file as many pieces of paperwork as he wants just to keep me and my neighbors uncomfortable. Due to my past experience of representing tenants I understand how the agencies work and can manage the myriad of layers of bureaucracy, but what about other people who are experiencing harassment. Even for myself, I understand the law, I understand what my rights are but it doesn't keep me immune from the stress that is associated with feeling like your housing is unstable. In addition, to work, family, the pandemic, I am dealing with my landlord who despite having many properties has no empathy for me and my neighbors. We need an anti-harassment ordinance passed because we need to dissuade landlords from simply wanting to constructively evict their tenants. We need an anti-harassment ordinance because landlords should value they have tenants who are willing to build community in their buildings. We need an anti-harassment ordinance because the manner in which we have set up this system leaves the tenant vulnerable to the abuse of a landlord.

Communication from Public

Name: Michael Shaw

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 01:26 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: Dear City Council member, As a member of the Westside local of the LA Tenants Union (and a renter), I hear about tenant's experiences with harassment of all sorts: construction and/or maintenance in an apartment's hallway or courtyard conducted without warning; intimidating and even threatening phone calls and/or emails from a landlord; and a recent case in which a landlord's crew actually entered a woman's apartment, while she was in her bedroom, to do 'maintenance,' but they were obviously there to intimidate her (at the least), and it not surprisingly made her feel very unsafe. I am requesting, even urging that you, the City Council, along with the Council President, immediately pass the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance in order to protect tenants from harmful harassment that happens day-in and day-out to tens of thousands of tenants and ultimately leads to “silent” evictions, evictions that go unrecorded. Harassment has always been a problem. Covid-19 makes it worse, but we need this now and for it to be permanent going forward. It affects tens of thousands of renters every day in Los Angeles. Before eviction often comes harassment. Almost everyone who has been evicted was first harassed. Please pass this Ordinance to protect tenants' rights and their quality of life in Los Angeles. Thank you for your consideration and hopefully for your passing of the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance. Sincerely, Michael Shaw

Communication from Public

Name: Jane Demian

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 09:23 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: This Motion (CF 14-0218-S-13) has been languishing in the City Council system for over 3 years. It was important then and even more important now. Tenant harassment is a practice that landlords use to force tenants out of their housing in order to raise the rent. Vacancy decontrol is the reason why landlords aggressively attempt vacate a rent-controlled unit to raise the rent to market rate. The result of this practice is that private property owners are harassing tenants through various nefarious means in order to raise the rent, and the tenants are becoming rent-burdened, and homeless. Pre-COVID the harassment took the form of incessant low-balling offers to move out via cash-for-keys, taking away previously agreed-upon amenities like parking, laundry, storage, and threatening eviction if tenant does not pay higher rent or extra fees etc. However, the COVID-19 crisis is showing us that harassment is being ramped up. During-COVID the Emergency Tenant Protections put in place by the LA City Council are not enough to protect tenants from the incessant harassing – threatening – screaming – insulting -- throwing things -- playing loud music all night-- turning off utilities -- locking tenants out of their units-- behaviors on the part of landlords and their agents. Please urge Council President Nury Martinez to place the Anti-Tenant Harassment Ordinance on the full City Council Agenda. It has been waived out of the Housing Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee, it needs to cover ALL TENANTS, both RSO and non-RSO, and it needs enforcement. Passing this ordinance will prevent tenant displacement, will stabilize communities, and prevent homelessness. Tenants need to be protected. This is URGENT!

Communication from Public

Name: Mariana Huerta

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 03:31 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to urge the members of the LA City Council Housing Committee to pass a PERMANENT tenant anti-harassment ordinance. No Angeleno should face harassment from their landlord as a means to displace them, and there should be consequences for landlords who engage in this abusive behavior. Landlords who harass their tenants should face serious penalties including fines of up to \$10,000 and face misdemeanor charges. Tenants should be provided with a private right of action where they may obtain relief, damages and costs. We need the City to take swift action to protect vulnerable tenants from landlord harassment and unjust evictions.

Communication from Public

Name: Araceli Amezquita

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 02:59 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: As a concerned member of the city of Los Angeles, I am asking city council to pass a law that protects tenants from ALL kinds of harassment from property owners. The pandemic clearly brought to light the tremendous amount of harassment cases from property owners towards tenants. This is not new, we have been waiting and hoping for a law that protects tenants from traumatic and constant harassment from property owners that feel superior and harass vulnerable tenants. The time is now, to put into action a law that will change the course of people's lives in a positive manner.

Communication from Public

Name: Katie McKeon

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 09:21 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: To the members of the Housing Committee: On behalf of Public Counsel, I urge the Housing Committee to publicly request that the L.A. City Council take up the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance for approval as soon as possible. Public Counsel is the nation's largest pro bono public interest law firm. We advocate on behalf of tenants and County residents who are experiencing homelessness to secure and maintain shelter, housing, and public benefits. We have counseled thousands of tenants who have experienced housing insecurity, including those who are at risk of losing their homes due to illegal harassment, lockouts, and other retaliatory behavior by landlords. As a result, we strongly support policies that protect tenants and prevent more people from ending up on the streets due to illegal activity, especially in the middle of a health pandemic. The City has considered the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance for more than 3 years – it is time to approve it and protect your constituents. Harassment by landlords has been a problem for many years – it has only been made worse by COVID-19. It will continue to happen as residents work to recover from the economic fallout from the pandemic. The City of LA has taken several steps in the past to protect tenants, including the implementation of rent stabilization policies that protect long-term tenants. However, these policies also increase the incentive for bad landlords and property management companies to harass long-term tenants so that the landlord can take advantage of vacancy control, resulting in much higher rents and driving gentrification in low-income neighborhoods. We must remove this incentive by enacting strong enforcement policies and penalties for any instances of harassment caused by this profit motive. The temporary COVID-19 anti-harassment provisions are just that – temporary. A comprehensive, permanent Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance will protect tenants from a wide range of harassing behavior indefinitely and allow tenants to more effectively assert their rights. Protect tens of thousands of your constituents from harmful harassment that happens day-in and day-out and ultimately leads to “silent” evictions that go unrecorded. Thank you, Katie McKeon Sullivan & Cromwell Staff Attorney Community Development Project

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 05:09 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: Hello, I'm writing to desperately urge you to immediately pass the Tenant anti-harassment ordinance! Until approximately two years ago I, like many, had the luxury of being unaware of Tenant harassment, then new owners purchased my rent stabilized building and the terror began. I do not use the word terror lightly. Out of more than twenty units only a few original Tenants remain; many of the Tenants who left were paying approximately \$500 a month on the Westside with parking (2019). It is life changing to relinquish a unit under those terms. One Tenant was displaced to Germany, others to the Valley, one became homeless. Rents have tripled. I have never in my entire lived through anything like this, words are not strong enough to described what I was forced to live through! I was shaking in fear, and became quite ill! The current safeguards and agencies in place are simply inadequate! I was regularly left without water, electricity, or basic services. Every day someone was pounding on my door trying to force me out! I was lied to, betrayed, humiliated, followed, video tapped, and terrorized. I fear I have permanent health issues as a direct result! A Tenant in my building died! I fear the same for myself! I did all the right things, I contacted HCIDLA, the police, DWP, Attorneys, and every agency. I regularly hear from Tenants who are also being harassed by their owners, the stories are horrific! The current protections are simply not enough. Please help us; please pass the Tenant anti-harassment ordinance NOW!

Communication from Public

Name: Edna Monroy

Date Submitted: 08/11/2020 05:42 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S13

Comments for Public Posting: I work with very low income tenants through our tenant action clinic, and have seen an increase in harassment cases where tenants find themselves having to choose between speaking up for their tenant rights to be respected or be pushed into homelessness. Tenants get harassed for asking the landlords to do their job and keep their homes SAFE, HEALTHY AND HABITABLE and comply with city and county code enforcement, which these agencies also need to have a stronger process to better support tenants and their tenant rights. Tenants get harassed for being long-term tenants and paying below market rate, and tricked and pressured to sign cash for keys and leave so landlords can rank up the rents. Tenants get harassed mentally, verbally, and at times even sexually for speaking up against mold, roach, rodent and bedbug infestations that don't always get cited and complied that make tenants, their children and entire families very sick, cause asthma, respiratory infections and permanent health damage. Tenants get their long-term parking spots taken away, and are not allowed to enjoy common spaces where children can play in peace and free from any verbal or psychological abuse and excessive notices for violating bogus tenant rules that did not exist before. Harassment has always been a problem before the current COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is making tenant harassment and abuse worse, and we need PERMANENT STRONG ANTI-HARASSMENT PROTECTIONS FOR ALL TENANTS. Without any vaccines, keeping tenants, some of the most vulnerable in our communities, housed and free from all forms of harassment is the only viable solution.