

In support of Council File #14-1635-S2 ✓

Hon. Mike Bonin:

As a constituent of yours I would like to give you my feelings about Airbnb. I have been an Airbnb host (paying city tax, etc.) and I am a retired Santa Monica College professor so I feel strongly about housing on the Westside.

My experience with Airbnb was amazing. Most of my guests were young couples doing the "circuit" (LA, SF, Yosemite, Las Vegas, Grand Canyon, etc.) They were doing it before settling down to marriage, children, a job and tight money. They were taking the funds they had for one grand trip. Because they could use Airbnb they were able to make the trip of a life-time before they were grandparents and not as free. Most were wonderful. Several were only here briefly but I felt like I wanted to adopt them. They came from all over the world (Berth, Peiking on a honeymoon, Slovenia.etc.) I learned so much from them and they were so relieved to be in a real home with a kitchen and motherly figure (lots of advice.) Without Airbnb they never would have made the trip and their idea of the US and California would have been different.

At the same time as a retired SMC professor I am concerned about housing for students and even new professors. Several years ago SMC had a Fulbright professor with \$30,00 for a year in LA. I was the only one in the Department to offer him a place to stay. "Let him stay in a hotel." We did not know about Airbnb and we needed to be good hosts. He stayed almost a month with me while we (a SMC colleague and I) helped him find appropriate lodging. Airbnb would have been better for him than a hotel but luckily he had me for free and we could take the time and drive him around until we found the perfect place. On the other hand international students also fly in for SMC and USC and need a place. Not all are rich enough for a hotel and Airbnb offers short-term stays while they check out in person possible homes and apartments where they might live for the year.

As an Airbnb hostess I became aware of the abuses: Two girls renting several houses and then re-renting then on Airbnb. Just give guests the key and be there to pick up the key when the guests leave. Did the owner of the house(s) know this was going on? It seem strange to me that two young woman had enough money and credit to actually own these homes.

Then I began to hear about apartments (that students used to be able to rent for the year) being turned into full-time short-term rentals with no actual California residents in the whole building. Students already had trouble finding housing this situation only made matters worse.

I understood Airbnb to be more of a guest program in homes with actual Americans who could orient them and help if needed. The wonderful experience I had (and my guests had) was not occurring in situations where the guests did not live with the Airbnb host. "Absentee short-term rentals."

Please make an ordinance that will allow these wonderful experiences for visitors and home owners while controlling the abuses. I paid the taxes which cut into a much needed income. Because Airbnb hosts have no employees, these taxes should be lower. Home-stays should be HOME-stays in some ONE'S home not just temporary hotel substitutes.

I would be more than pleased to talk to you about the situation. My home phone is [310/823-0818](tel:3108230818). Please write a law that will allow the increased tourism that Airbnb foments as well as the short-term home-stays that students need.

Sincerely,
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