

MOTION

The federally-funded Housing Choice Voucher Program (commonly referred to as Section 8) is a critical tool cities use to help their very low-income residents obtain affordable and decent housing. In Los Angeles however, there are currently over 2,700 holders of vouchers who cannot find a unit to rent.

One of the contributing reasons for this is the stigma associated with Section 8 among landlords. As a result, many Angelenos in need wait years on a list to get approved for a voucher, only to have that voucher expire before they are able to use it. Voucher underutilization has broader impacts on the amount of Federal HUD funding that HACLA receives and leaves many families at greater risk of falling into homelessness. In response to this problem, many cities have prohibited discrimination against voucher holders.

The California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) already prohibits discrimination based on "source of income." However, rental assistance (including Section 8 vouchers) is not considered an income source under FEHA. Therefore, in order to prevent discrimination against voucher holders, cities must implement their own local policy. To date, more than 40 local jurisdictions have done so.

Research has shown that locations with such "source of income" laws see significant improvements in utilization rates. By increasing voucher utilization, Los Angeles would help a significant number of individuals and families secure housing and prevent them from falling into homelessness.

I THEREFORE MOVE that City Council INSTRUCT the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and the Housing and Community Investment Department, in consultation with the City Attorney, to report back in 60 days on policy options, including applicable enforcement mechanisms, which will increase acceptance and utilization of Section 8 vouchers.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council instruct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance for consideration by the Council that will prohibit discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders in rental housing.

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