



**April 9, 2019**

Councilmember Gil Cedillo, Chair  
Housing Committee  
City Hall 200 N. Spring Street, Room 460  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Support Motion to Prohibit Discrimination Against Voucher Holders (CF 18-0462)**

Dear Councilmember Cedillo:

On behalf of People Organized for Westside Renewal (**POWER**), I am writing to express our strong support for the motion to prevent landlords from discriminating against people with government rental subsidies. This bill would ensure Los Angeles' most vulnerable households have access to quality, affordable housing, especially in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods where they may have family, friends, and a social network that they can no longer access because they have been priced out.

For the minority of income-eligible households who are able to secure housing assistance, it is all-too-common that they are unable to even apply for housing in their home neighborhoods because they cannot find a landlord willing to accept housing assistance payments. This situation is especially prevalent in the neighborhoods where POWER organizes in the Westside, Hollywood and San Fernando Valley areas of Los Angeles. Eventually, these families are forced to return this valuable assistance unused, even though it is intended to enable them to access housing they otherwise could not afford.

Citywide, HACLA reports that there are over 3,500 voucher holders looking for housing but that only 53% will find a landlord willing to accept it before their voucher expires. And because HUD bases future voucher allocations, in part, on the speed with which they are leased up, landlord discrimination against voucher holders will result in fewer vouchers in the future.

Currently, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), the State law prohibiting source of income discrimination doesn't extend to government rental subsidies like Section 8 Housing Choice, VASH and County Measure H rental subsidies. Landlords have used this loophole to discriminate against voucher holders without repercussions. Cities in California (and across the country) have already prohibited landlord discrimination against rental subsidies. It's time for Los Angeles to join them.

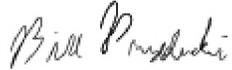
Despite the claims of some landlords that it is the red-tape and not the tenants that are the problem, recent evidence suggests otherwise. Over the past four years, HACLA, the Mayor, United Way, the Hilton Foundation and City Council have met with landlords to design and implement programs to address landlord concerns. The programs have provided landlords with: 1) free handy workers to prepare for habitability inspections; 2) security

deposits; 3) streamlined appointments to reduce time off the market; 4) compensation for time off the market; 5) mitigation funds to pay damages to the unit; and more. In spite of all these efforts, landlord participation has decreased. For landlords, it's not the program; it's the people.

The City has tried to cater to the landlords needs but it hasn't improved results. With thousands stuck in homelessness because they can't use their voucher, it's time to prohibit discrimination. POWER asks for your and the Housing Committee's support for prohibiting discrimination against voucher holders.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Przylucki".

Bill Przylucki, Executive Director