

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

Dear Mayor and City Council:

We appreciate the work of City Staff and the Council to bring the ordinance back for consideration quickly. There are a few important issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that tenant-relocation assistance reaches qualifying tenants in a timely and straightforward manner and doesn't place an unreasonable burden on those that this ordinance is intended to serve. As such, we are advocating for the following changes to the proposed ordinance:

1. Ensure that tenants receive the full relocation-assistance payment prior to vacating their unit-- within 15 days of service of a 30/60-day notice to vacate or within 5 calendar days from the date the tenant notifies the landlord they intend to move after a qualifying rent increase.
2. Align with State law and remove the provision that tenants have to notify landlords that they are staying in their unit after a qualifying rent increase. Tenants should only have to notify landlords when they plan to vacate their unit.
3. Include language that makes failure to notify tenants of their rights to relocation an affirmative defense to an eviction.

Those who oppose tenant protections are attempting to further weaken this ordinance by proposing more exemptions to the ordinance. The proposal that 6-months notice would get a landlord out of paying relocation ignores the fact that many low income, senior, and disabled renters are living paycheck to paycheck (or on fixed incomes) and don't have excess income to tuck away for moving expenses and up to three months' rent for a new apartment (first month, last month, security deposit). Six months advance notice won't prevent the most vulnerable renters from falling into homelessness. Additionally, the proposed ordinance is already excluding duplexes, triplexes, and all units built after February 1995. If anything, we need to be working toward a strong policy that will apply more renters.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters, and for the steps you are taking to prevent homelessness and increase the stability of Long Beach residents and families.

Sincerely, the undersigned Everyone Home Task Force members:

Jane Close Conoley, California State University, Long Beach
Andy Kerr, Measure H Citizens' Oversight Advisory Board
Brenda Threatt, United States Veterans Initiative
Chris Wing, SCAN Health Plan
Christina Miller, Mental Health America of Los Angeles
Christine Petit, Long Beach Forward
Gregory Sanders, Long Beach Ministers Alliance
Kathryn Miles, Jewish Family & Children's Service
Mary Ellen Mitchell, WomenShelter of Long Beach
Reagan Romali, Long Beach City College
Susana Sngiem, United Cambodian Community
Tonya Burns, formerly of Children Today

