

Communication from Public

Name: Melody Forsythe
Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 05:43 PM
Council File No: 19-0603
Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT - Testimony of Kimberly Paggett, Director of Inner City Education and Education Advocacy and Literacy for Leimert Park, submits her testimony in support of Building A Safer Los Angeles, to the LA City Council Public Safety Committee Meeting – June 2, 2021

**Testimony of Kimberly Paggett,
Director of Inner City Education and Education Advocacy and Literacy for Leimert Park
LA City Council Public Safety Committee Meeting – June 2, 2021**

Hello my name is Kimberly Paggett and I am the Director of Inner City Education and Education Advocacy and Literacy for Leimert Park.

I am here to advocate on behalf of *Building a Safer Los Angeles* Motion and hope that this committee will move Councilmembers Rodriguez and Blumenfield's motion back to the full council. As you're all aware, Los Angeles no longer has a fire season. It's year round and those of us who can afford to live in lower density areas have a slight advantage to those who live in more densely populated areas.

We need to ensure that those who don't have a choice but to live in multi-family homes--are at least living in the most resilient buildings that can withstand the threat of fires. By building with non-combustible materials, affordable housing within Fire District 1 would be resilient and safer--something that these families deserve in a home.

I appreciate each of the councilmembers here for taking the time to listen to myself and others speak on behalf of this motion. I look forward to the discussion about this and hope that this committee will pass this amended motion so that communities across the city have the chance to live in a multi-family building that is the safest it can be. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Rev. Walter Contreras, Vice President, National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC)

Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 05:28 PM

Council File No: 19-0603

Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT - Testimony - Rev. Walter Contreras, Vice President, National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC), submits his testimony in support of Building A Safer Los Angeles (CF 19-0603), before the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee Meeting, June 2nd, 2021

Testimony – Rev. Walter Contreras, Vice President,
National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC)
Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee Meeting, June 2nd, 2021

Thank you and good afternoon, Chairwoman Rodriguez, and Councilmembers O'Farrell, Buscaino, De Leon, and Harris-Dawson:

My name is Rev. Walter Contreras, I represent the *National Latino Evangelical Coalition* (NaLEC). We voice our continued support for *Build with Strength Los Angeles* in their efforts to strengthen our communities by using safer, sustainable building materials for multi-family housing such as concrete, steel, and fire treated wood.

This motion and the eventual ordinance WILL NOT raise the cost of low income or single family housing in our communities. With the costs of non-combustible materials far lower than traditional construction materials – this motion will mean overall construction costs will be LESS expensive and will protect our most vulnerable populations by providing safe and resilient housing.

Our diverse coalition is in support of this motion because we know that it means that the most vulnerable communities, who cannot afford to live in low-density areas, will be housed in buildings that are resilient to the threat of year-round fire season.

We believe it is a critical step for this committee to move this ordinance along.

Following another series of fires in the Los Angeles area this year, we worked within the community to take a step forward to address public safety. Councilmember Blumenfield's motion is a significant step in the right direction and we are encouraged by its progress for all city residents. I have been speaking about this issue since 2019 and appreciate that this committee and other Councilmembers have listened to our thoughts.

I hope you will consider my thoughts on this issue once again and look forward to hearing your decision about this important motion.

Communication from Public

Name: Antoine Brown, Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 04:54 PM
Council File No: 19-0603
Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT_Antoine Brown, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, submits his testimony in favor of Building A Safer Los Angeles, LA City Council Public Safety Meeting – June 2, 2021

Testimony of Antoine Brown,
Southern Christian Leadership Conference
LA City Council Public Safety Meeting – June 2, 2021

Hello my name is Antoine Brown and I represent the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. I am here today to voice my support for the *Building a Safer Los Angeles* motion and urge this committee to pass this amended motion.

At SCLC, we believe that housing--affordable housing--is one of our continued fights in the civil rights movement. Those who live in affordable housing deserve to be housed in something that is built well and can protect its inhabitants from outside threats such as fire. We support this ordinance because it will ensure that affordable housing can be built resiliently and at a lower cost. Protecting communities of color, and those that cannot afford to live in lower density areas, those that have traditionally been marginalized by city regulations is critical in this moment.

This motion does that by requiring fire-prone, densely populated areas to build multi-family homes with non-combustible materials.

Once again I thank you for taking the time to listen to me and others today. I hope that you, Councilmembers, will take into account our support of this motion when you discuss the next steps for this important issue. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Gloria Colazo, Vice-President, St Jude Board of Directors,
Director for Salvadorian Committees

Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 04:58 PM

Council File No: 19-0603

Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT_Testimony – Gloria Colazo, Vice-President, St Jude Board of Directors, Director for Salvadorian Committees, submits her testimony in support of Building A Safer Los Angeles to the LA City Council Public Safety Hearing June 2nd, 2021

Testimony – LA City Council Public Safety Hearing June 2nd, 2021
Gloria Colazo, Vice-President, St Jude Board of Directors,
Director for Salvadorian Committees

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Rodriguez, and Councilmembers O'Farrell, Buscaino, De Leon, and Harris-Dawson:

My name is Gloria Colazo. As Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of St. Jude Health Centers and Director for Salvadoran Chamber of Commerce and these communities, we advocate for socio-economically challenged families for safe and affordable housing.

I was unable to come to the last Public Safety Committee Hearing in March, when you last discussed this ordinance--but I have spoken on this issue since 2019 and urge you all to pass this ordinance through today so that we can protect the most vulnerable of Angelenos by building fire-resilient multi-family housing.

Safety and resilience is a top priority thanks to the work of Councilmembers Blumenfield and Rodriguez's fire-life-safety ordinance, *Building a Safer Los Angeles*, which limits the ways flammable and combustible materials can be utilized in new low to mid-rise multi-family construction. We commend Councilmember Harris-Dawson for advancing this motion and his continued support.

Our vulnerable populations need safety and resiliency when it comes to housing. Low income families face the most difficulties starting over after a fire. They are counting on your leadership in the Public Safety Committee to ensure that the much needed low-income housing is built safely across the city.

I want to stress to you all that we have a diverse coalition of supporters on this call who have spoken to this committee and the entire council a number of times. We all want to see more affordable housing in this city but we also want it to be built in a way that protects those who inhabit these structures.

This ordinance ensures that affordable housing can be built with resiliency and at a lower cost. With skyrocketing costs for lumber and other materials, using the safest and most cost effective materials is going to be essential for the city as it addresses the housing crisis.

I urge you to do the same and pass this motion without delay. Those most vulnerable are counting on you.

Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: David Garfinkle, Tarzana Neighborhood Council & Tarzana Property Owners Association

Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 05:01 PM

Council File No: 19-0603

Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT_ Testimony of David Garfinkle, Tarzana Neighborhood Council, Member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Land Use Committee, President of the Tarzana Property Owners Association (TPOA), submits his testimony in support of Building A Safer Los Angeles, before the LA City Council Public Safety Meeting – June 2, 2021

Testimony of David Garfinkle,
Tarzana Neighborhood Council, Member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Land
Use Committee, President of the Tarzana Property Owners Association (TPOA)
LA City Council Public Safety Meeting – June 2, 2021

Thank you and good afternoon, Chairwoman Rodriguez, and Councilmembers
O'Farrell, Buscaino, De Leon, and Harris-Dawson:

My name is David Garfinkle. I am the President of Tarzana Property Owners
Association, and Member of the Board and Chair of the Land Use Committee for the
Tarzana Neighborhood Council. Community development and building codes are of the
utmost importance to us. We have a strong history of accomplishments over the past 45
years working with developers and government agencies to improve Building and
Safety regulations.

We recognize the amended motion, *Building A Safer Los Angeles*, is necessary and
critical as we enter what experts predict may be the most destructive year-round fire
season this state has ever seen. Residents living in multi-family structures in densely
populated areas of the city are the most vulnerable and therefore deserve the highest
fire life safety protections.

Building A Safer Los Angeles ensures that affordable housing can be built with
resiliency and at a lower cost to protect families in these densely populated areas of Los
Angeles in an expanded Fire District 1.

The report by The Department of Building and Safety clearly indicates that the council
has the authority to amend and update Fire District #1, it also clearly denotes that the
council CAN develop a Fire Protection Plan. And with this fire season having started
already, it's crucial that this motion is passed in this committee today.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this issue today.

Communication from Public

Name: Pastor Thembekila, Christ Liberation Ministries
Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 05:05 PM
Council File No: 19-0603
Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT_Testimony of Pastor Thembekila, Christ Liberation Ministries, submits her testimony in favor of Building A Safer Los Angeles, to the LA City Council Public Safety Committee – June 2, 2021

Testimony of Pastor Thembekila,
Christ Liberation Ministries
LA City Council Public Safety Meeting – June 2, 2021

Good Afternoon, I am Pastor Thembekila Smart representing Christ Liberation Ministries.

I am here on behalf of hundreds of thousands of residents in Los Angeles, who are of lower income and many that currently reside in housing developments and others that will be built in the near future. These people need the same protections that the rest of the wealthier communities in our city have... there is no room in our community for inequities.

I implore this committee to move the motion, *Building a Safer Los Angeles*, along so that we have an ordinance in place that will ensure that those who need affordable housing--also live somewhere that is safe.

I heard that a new report by the Department of Building and Safety states that building a multi-family home with non-combustible materials will only drive up costs. But this report is flawed and the information in it isn't a complete story. Building materials aren't the whole picture when it comes to the cost of affordable housing. It's really the cost of land in this city that makes it so expensive to build more affordable housing.

At the end of the day, improving fire safety construction standards will matter the most to people trapped in a multi-story building in the event of a fire. It will mean the most to the first responders who will risk their lives to save the men, women, children; the elderly, the disabled and our veterans.

We cannot afford to wait any longer on ensuring the strongest standards for construction for the buildings that residents of Los Angeles will call home. We cannot afford to lose another life, and we cannot hold back on passing this practical and essential motion. Our community of faith leaders and parishioners are counting on the city council's leadership to make that happen.

Communication from Public

Name: Mohamed Khan, Interfaith Leader – American Muslims for Sustainability

Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 05:17 PM

Council File No: 19-0603

Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT Testimony of Mohamed Khan, Interfaith Leader – American Muslims for Sustainability, submits his testimony in support of Building A Safer Los Angeles to the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee, June 2nd, 2021

Testimony of Mohamed Khan
Interfaith Leader – American Muslims for Sustainability
Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee Meeting, June 2nd, 2021

Thank you and good afternoon, Chairwoman Rodriguez, and Councilmembers O’Farrell, Buscaino, De Leon, and Harris-Dawson:

My name is Mohamed Khan, I represent American Muslims for Sustainability. I am here today as an activist for affordable, sustainable and safe housing for all Angelenos.

For years I have worked in the community building coalitions and supporting those that are less fortunate, or faith communities that are so important to our city. We have a major housing crisis in our city, we also have to assure that the housing we build is safe, affordable and will allow families that often live 3 and four to an apartment, the confidence that their home will be built to the most rigorous and resilient and sustainable standards possible.

This motion before you today WILL NOT raise the cost of low income or single-family housing in our communities. In fact, the National Homebuilders and your own department of finance has raised concerns about the rising costs of materials such as lumber and other products as a potential concern with regards to being able to create housing for the much-needed un-housed populations in our community.

Additionally, as you know we are about to enter potentially the worst fire season in a generation. We cannot look back at this after the fires have devastated more communities and say well if only we had passed that motion. Today, you have the opportunity to take communities of color and house them in safe affordable multi-family homes, and do it knowing they will last decades, and will survive the unpredictable hazards of Southern California.

I spent some time with the great boxing champ Mohamed Ali, and he once said: “he who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life”.

I am part of a diverse coalition of folks who you heard from today who are in the community – we are not rich developers, or protecting large corporations, we are individuals working in the community to help people live safely in affordable homes.

That is why it is important for this committee to move this ordinance along.

Councilmember Blumenfeld’s motion is what this city needs, and please don’t listen to the special interest’s groups and those that think they know our community. We know what is right and we know what the needs are of city residents. I have spoken to many of you on other issues impacting the Faith community and have prayed with many of you during good times and bad. I ask you all to please do what is right and lead our state in creating safe affordable housing a reality.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing this motion succeed.

Communication from Public

Name: Pastor Cue, Church Without Walls Skid Row, and CLUE
Date Submitted: 06/03/2021 05:20 PM
Council File No: 19-0603
Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT Testimony, Pastor Cue, Church Without Walls Skid Row, and CLUE, submits his testimony in support of Building A Safer Los Angeles to the Public Safety Committee Hearing, June 2, 2021

Testimony, Pastor Cue for Public Safety Committee Hearing, June 2, 2021

Good afternoon, my name is Pastor Cue from the Church Without Walls Skid Row, also with CLUE. They say, "If you stay ready, you ain't gotta get ready." And we do not want to get ready after a fire has occurred. This is why I'm here once again in support of the *Building a Safer Los Angeles* motion, authored by Councilmembers Rodriguez and Blumenfield.

I support this motion because I know what it's like to work with those, to talk to those who are in desperate need of a housing solution. While I recognize that this motion doesn't necessarily PROMISE to build the necessary housing--I know this motion will ensure that affordable housing will be built in the most cost effective and resilient way.

Because the greatest cost - is the cost of life. And oftentimes, we do not see that as the case depending on where we are geographically in our city. And, the most densely populated areas in our cities, usually are the places where people of color live. To pass this motion is to affirm that the lives of those Angelenos who can't afford to live in the lower density areas matter just as much as their better-off counterparts.

Those lives are important. That's why we say, "Black Lives Matter;" The greatest cost is the cost of life. I approve and support this motion because I know that it will shelter people in stronger housing that can be resilient in the face of a never-ending fire season.