

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Gina K. Thornburg, PhD

**Date Submitted:** 03/05/2025 12:35 PM

**Council File No:** 25-0006-S16

**Comments for Public Posting:** The League of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles (LWVGLA) supports policies, practices, and processes, as well as funding measures and mechanisms, that prevent homelessness and shorten the duration of stints of homelessness and that support compassionate, effective, and respectful approaches toward people experiencing homelessness or people who are on the brink of homelessness. In support of this position, the League advocates, among other things, for (1) improvements in the city's administration of rental-support, income-support, and eviction-protection programs that prevent homelessness and (2) City actions demonstrating fidelity to all components and ongoing implementation of the Enhanced Comprehensive Homeless Strategy. The urban conflagrations that resulted in catastrophic destruction of the Pacific Palisades community displaced thousands of residents, business owners, and workers. As Council File 25-0006-S16 correctly points out, deleterious effects on housing security typically follow such disasters. The League is concerned that residents and workers displaced by the fires are at increased risk of becoming homeless. Therefore, the Homelessness Action Committee of the LWVGLA would like to comment as follows: Although CF 25-0006-S16 rightly implies that workers who are renters and who have lost their sources of income due to the Palisades Fire may face increased risk of eviction if they fail to pay rent, a one-year eviction moratorium for this subset of renters may not be the best remedy for all parties involved. The eviction moratoria imposed as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, for example, postponed evictions when renters could not afford to pay all of the back rent owed to property owners when the moratoria expired. The League does not wish to see a wave of evictions this year or early next year, when CF 25-0006-S16 proposes an end to the eviction moratorium. Moreover, the League supports the preservation of naturally occurring affordable rental units. Smaller, older multifamily buildings often exemplify this type of housing, particularly if they were built before 1978. The city's Enhanced Comprehensive Homeless Strategy supports the preservation of affordable housing. Too often in this city, developers have demolished smaller apartment communities subjected to the RSO and replaced them with huge, market-rate apartment high-rises, causing

displacement of longtime tenants. A one-year eviction moratorium for tenants who attest to having experienced fire-related economic hardship could cause serious economic hardship for mom-and-pop landlords, if rental-assistance programs fail to ensure that these rents are paid to such landlords in a timely manner. Moreover, the motion would, in part, lead the LAHD to subcontract with a third party to implement the suggested tenant protections. What accountability mechanisms would be adopted in such a contract? The city would do well to ensure, as stated in the Housing and Homelessness Committee Report attached to this council file, that a rental-assistance program is in place for mom-and-pop landlords whose tenants cannot pay rent because of fire-related economic hardship and as evidenced by the attestation process. The attestation process could lead to unwelcome consequences for undocumented workers who lost their sources of income in the Palisades Fire. If workers were paid in cash and/or are undocumented, they may be fearful to complete the declaration form proposed by the LAHD or may be unable to prove that they have lost their source of employment. The city and county have established programs and recovery centers, where workers who lost their incomes due to the Palisades Fire could seek not only rental assistance but also job-placement, temporary-employment, and job-training assistance. The state of California is also marshalling resources to help fire victims. In addition, the governor recently announced a new Jobs First economic development strategy, which could benefit people who have lost their sources of employment because of the fires. Likewise, there are several government programs providing rental assistance, as well as programs in the nonprofit sector. Are existing fire-recovery programs sufficient to assist those who have lost their livelihoods? Unclear is how enforcement of an extension of California Penal Code 396(a) would be operationalized. Although the League agrees that an extension to six months is reasonable, which City resources would enforce the code in response to complaints and what would such enforcement look like? Because of these concerns, the League would support a moratorium on evictions only if a rental assistance program for landlords would ensure that they could continue to collect an equivalent in the rental payments missed by tenants experiencing economic hardship due to the fires. However, given the city's budget constraints, how would such assistance be funded? ....[Our full comment is attached.]



TO: Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council

FROM: The League of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles, Homelessness Action Committee

RE: Council File 25-0006-S16

DATE: March 4, 2025

The League of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles (LWVGLA) supports policies, practices, and processes, as well as funding measures and mechanisms, that prevent homelessness and shorten the duration of stints of homelessness and that support compassionate, effective, and respectful approaches toward people experiencing homelessness or people who are on the brink of homelessness.

In support of this position, the League advocates, among other things, for (1) improvements in the city's administration of rental-support, income-support, and eviction-protection programs that prevent homelessness and (2) City actions demonstrating fidelity to all components and ongoing implementation of the Enhanced Comprehensive Homeless Strategy, which was adopted on March 19, 2019.

The urban conflagrations that resulted in catastrophic destruction of the Pacific Palisades community in January displaced thousands of residents, business owners, and workers. As Council File 25-0006-S16 correctly points out, deleterious effects on housing security typically follow such disasters. The League is deeply concerned that residents and workers displaced by the fires are at increased risk of becoming homeless. Therefore, the Homelessness Action Committee of the LWVGLA would like to make the following comments on CF 25-0006-S16:

Although CF 25-0006-S16 rightly implies that workers who are renters and who have lost their sources of income due to the Palisades Fire may face increased risk of eviction if they fail to pay rent, a one-year eviction moratorium for this subset of renters may not be the best remedy for all parties involved. The eviction moratoria imposed as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, for example, postponed evictions when renters could not afford to pay all of the back rent owed to property owners when the moratoria expired (see, for example, <https://laist.com/news/housing-homelessness/small-landlords-tenant-eviction-moratorium-rent-relief-california-los-angeles> and <https://laist.com/news/housing-homelessness/covid-19-rent-debt-la-evictions>). The League does not wish to see a wave of evictions this year or early next year, when CF 25-0006-S16 proposes an end to the eviction moratorium.

Moreover, the League supports the preservation of naturally occurring affordable rental units. Smaller, older multifamily buildings often exemplify this type of housing, particularly if they were built before 1978. The city's Enhanced Comprehensive Homeless Strategy supports the preservation of affordable housing. Too often in this city, developers have demolished smaller apartment communities subjected to the RSO and replaced them with huge, market-rate apartment high-rises, causing displacement of longtime tenants. A one-year-long moratorium on

eviction for tenants who attest to having experienced economic hardship related to the January 2025 fires could cause serious economic hardship for mom-and-pop landlords, if rental-assistance programs fail to ensure that these rents are paid to such landlords in a timely manner. Moreover, the motion would, in part, lead the LAHD to subcontract with a third party to implement the suggested tenant protections (see 25-006-s16\_rpt\_mayor-01-17-2025). The city would do well to ensure, as stated in the Housing and Homelessness Committee Report attached to this council file, that a rental-assistance program is in place for mom-and-pop landlords whose tenants cannot pay rent because of fire-related economic hardship and as evidenced by the attestation process.

The attestation process could lead to unwelcome consequences for undocumented workers who lost their sources of income in the Palisades Fire. If workers were paid in cash and/or are undocumented, they may be fearful to complete the declaration form proposed by the LAHD or may be unable to prove that they have lost their source of employment.

The city and county have established several programs and several physical locations, i.e., recovery centers, where workers who lost their incomes due to the Palisades Fire could seek not only rental assistance but also job-placement, temporary-employment, and job-training assistance (see <https://emergency.lacity.gov/sites/g/files/wph1791/files/2025-02/Impacted%20Workers%20and%20Families%20Resource%20Flyer2.pdf>). The state of California is also marshalling resources to help the various victims of the fires (<https://www.ca.gov/LAfires/>). In addition, the governor recently announced a new Jobs First economic development strategy, which could benefit people who have lost their sources of employment because of the fires. Likewise, there are several government programs providing rental assistance, as well as programs in the nonprofit sector (e.g., <https://www.ncjwla.org/resources/la-wrap/>).

Unclear is how enforcement of an extension of the anti-price-gouging California Penal Code 396(a) would be operationalized. Although the League agrees that an extension to six months is reasonable, which City resources would enforce the code in response to complaints and what would such enforcement look like?

The LAHD report accompanying this council file states, “Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has adopted numerous tenant protections without any staffing resources.” The department seeks the authority to outsource implementation of tenant protections to a third party. What accountability mechanisms would be adopted to ensure that the tenant protections are having their intended effect?

Because of these and other concerns, the League would support a moratorium on evictions only if a rental assistance program for landlords would ensure that they could continue to collect an equivalent in the rental payments missed by tenants experiencing economic hardship due to the fires. Measure ULA, for example, for a time had opened an Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). The program paid more than \$31 million in claims to qualifying tenants and landlords, but many of the applications for rental assistance were “closed due to insufficient



program funds” (see <https://housing.lacity.gov/ula-erap>), and the program seems to have been suspended. The City Council Housing and Homelessness Committee has instructed LAHD to develop a rental assistance program for mom-and-pop landlords. Given the ongoing budget crisis in the City of LA, how would such a program be funded? In contrast, it appears that the city may find funding to help at-risk tenants who suffered income loss due to the fires and can provide proof of such loss. The revision to CF 25-0006-S16 on the March 4 agenda requests that LAHSA report back with recommendations to enable the city’s access to Problem Solving Funds for people experiencing homelessness and/or at imminent risk of homelessness to due to the 2025 fire storms.

Are the existing fire-recovery programs at various levels of governance sufficient for assisting tenants whose livelihoods were cut off because of the fires? If they are, is Council File 25-0006-S16 necessary? If, however, these programs are inadequate, and if the City Council deems that a moratorium on evictions is necessary, we recommend that the burden of nonpayment of rent not be shouldered by landlords, especially those property owners whose buildings are subject to the RSO and the Just Cause Ordinance and who will fit the definition of mom-and-pop landlord that the LAHD and Office of Finance devise. The city must balance the systemic need to preserve affordable housing with the urgent moral and socioeconomic imperative to prevent homelessness.

The tenant-protection provisions regarding evictions and rent increases related to providing shelter to unauthorized occupants and pets displaced by the recent fires have already passed City Council and are now voiced in Ordinance No. 188486. We support the spirit and provisions of that ordinance, which will expire one year after its February 24 adoption.

Sincerely,

Gina K. Thornburg, PhD

Chair, Homelessness Action Committee

League of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Jonathan Stout AIA

**Date Submitted:** 03/04/2025 12:07 PM

**Council File No:** 25-0006-S16

**Comments for Public Posting:** Please refrain from installing another governmental roadblock to freedom of Capitalism. Governmental interference in the vein of Social Engineering is not needed. The people do not require another Big Brother interference. Please leave rent to self-adjust through supply and demand. Eviction restrictions should not exist. It is very simple ... if one can't afford a Mercedes then don't buy a Mercedes. Buy a Toyota or an older used car. Eviction restrictions are very destructive and hurt individuals who have managed to obtain some sort of rental property. Then the government comes along and destroys that hard working citizen by mandating they lose a year or more of rent income. Absurd. Very clearly Socialism. Not American Capitalism that built this nation. This topic should not even be on the table.

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 03/04/2025 12:39 PM

**Council File No:** 25-0006-S16

**Comments for Public Posting:** I am a realtor and a small landlord . If a moratorium was to be put on and I got a tenant who did not pay rent I would go into foreclosure and loose my condo . If this law is implemented It leaves me no choice but to sell it to protect my home . PleSe reconsider this . Thank you