

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Emily Filkin

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**Council File No:** 25-0006-S77

**Comments for Public Posting:** I am a tenant in City Council District 8 and a volunteer with The Rent Brigade. I want to thank Councilmember Soto-Martinez for taking action to introduce this motion, and I want to strongly urge all members of LA City Council to join him in voting YES on this motion. Since the fires started in January, over 12,000 homes have been destroyed, forcing residents into an already strained rental market. Bad actors have taken advantage of this tragedy to raise rents beyond the legal limit. While there are rent gouging laws in place, they are not being enforced. Our organization, The Rent Brigade, has uncovered over 13,000 rent gouged listings on Zillow. Yet, the City Attorney has filed only two rent gouging lawsuits. Volunteers for the Rent Brigade have taken matters into our own hands, reporting unlawful listings on Zillow and calling landlords to tell them they are breaking the law. While some landlords lower the rent or take down their listings in response, many of them don't. Many landlords continue to price their units beyond the legal limit because they see the law as toothless. They will do whatever is profitable for them. When there are no fines being levied, there are no financial consequences for their actions. It is not enough to give bad actors a slap on the wrist, the City has to make their pockets hurt. Rent gouging is a crime, and it should be punished. We want to know that our efforts are not in vain, and that the City is taking enforcement of Penal Code 396(e) seriously. We want the City Attorney to issue monthly reports on how many rent gouging complaints her office has received, and what investigation and enforcement actions she has taken to address the problem. This is a common-sense motion that should pass with every council members' support. Please vote YES on Agenda Item 35.