

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Pablo Estupiñan  
**Date Submitted:** 09/10/2024 10:21 PM  
**Council File No:** 14-0268-S18  
**Comments for Public Posting:** I have attached the LA Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition's position on the draft Right to Counsel. In summary, we urge the Council to vote yes in support of the amendments proposed by the Housing and Homeless Committee. Thank you.



Los Angeles City Council  
200 N Spring St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

September 11, 2024

RE: Agenda item #1 Right to Counsel Ordinance from the LA RTC Coalition

Dear Los Angeles City Council Members,

Thank you for your leadership in moving towards adopting a right to counsel ordinance for Los Angeles City. The Los Angeles Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition (The Coalition) believes that a right to counsel for tenants facing eviction is a key policy needed to support the City's efforts to uphold tenants' rights and prevent even more homelessness in the midst of dual homelessness and housing affordability crises. We believe that your ordinance has the potential to achieve both of these goals.

We strongly support the amendments passed by the Housing and Homeless committee last month. To ensure consistency within the Ordinance, we call on the City Attorney's office to make one more suggested edit, which is to strike the second paragraph in the purpose section (section 166.01): ~~This Ordinance does not establish a right to city funded counsel in eviction proceedings or in administrative proceedings that may result in the termination of a tenant's rental housing subsidy but rather codifies the City Funded Counsel for Tenants Program subject to the availability of funding and annual appropriations.~~ Neither Los Angeles County or any other national jurisdiction has such a disclaimer and it would only serve to confuse tenants.

The Coalition has been advocating for this ordinance for six years. During that time we have studied best practices of other jurisdictions and duplicated them via the Stay Housed LA program (SHLA) that began in 2020. We particularly looked to New York City (as the city with comparable population and high eviction filings) which first adopted a Right to Counsel for tenants in 2017. One best practice SHLA took from New York City is a zip code phase in. Only this method ensures that we achieve Right to Counsel in sub-geographies before the complete roll out of the program. Unlike NYC, which started with a single zip code in each borough, SHLA knowingly created a specific methodology to ensure that the most vulnerable communities are phased in first, while ensuring that some part of all council districts are chosen by year 2 at the latest. The ZIP code phase-in considers three primary metrics to choose ZIP codes: displacement vulnerability of tenants (based on the OWN-IT tool, adopted by LAHD), the number of evictions filed, and the capacity of SHLA attorneys to represent eligible tenants.

SHLA also provides services to tenants in non-priority zip codes. SHLA's Tenant Empowerment Program offers intensive training on self-representation to tenants unable to retain legal



representation, and attorneys substitute into cases when they can. In the fiscal year 2023-24, the TEP program provided court representation to 167 City of LA tenants in 2023 and provided legal assistance to another 898 tenants with self-representation. SHLA also offers limited legal assistance to all eligible tenants regardless of zip code in clinics or via the SHLA hotline, and offers weekly workshops to all Los Angeles tenants, as well as cold outreach.

Since SHLA began in the City of Los Angeles in 2021, we have represented 3,237 tenants in court, provided legal assistance to another 10,367 tenants. We have distributed \$7 million in settlement assistance to over 600 households. CBOs have hosted nearly 700 workshops attended by over 13,000 tenants, connected with 747,000 tenants by phone, text, and in-person outreach, and provided tenant navigation to 29,000 tenants.

Once again, we thank you for adopting the most effective Right to Counsel ordinance possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pablo Estupiñan".

Pablo Estupiñan, Campaign Director

Los Angeles Renters' Right to Counsel Coalition

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Christina Boyar

**Date Submitted:** 09/10/2024 07:43 PM

**Council File No:** 14-0268-S18

**Comments for Public Posting:** My name is Christina Boyar and I'm an attorney at Public Counsel and in full support of Right to Counsel. I am a renter, and I live in CD5. I strongly support a codified Right to Counsel ordinance. I also support all of the amendments passed by the Housing and Homeless Committee members last month. We call on the City Attorney's Office to also fix the declaration of purpose so it is in line with Council directives to draft a Right to Counsel Ordinance. Lastly, I'd like to thank all the Councilmembers who have already voted yes to advance a Right to Counsel Ordinance. I also want to thank Councilmember Raman for your leadership on this critical issue. I urge all City Councilmembers to vote yes on RTC today and support the amendments passed by the Housing and Homeless Committee. Thank you!