

Communication from Public

Name: Andrea Gonzalez

Date Submitted: 09/23/2024 12:10 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Andrea Gonzalez, I am commenting on agenda item number 30 and general comment. I live in Council District number 10. I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today. The Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO.

Communication from Public

Name: Marisol Granillo Arce

Date Submitted: 09/23/2024 03:15 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Marisol Granillo Arce. I am commenting on agenda item number 30 and general comments. I live in Council District number 10. I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. Furthermore, the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO. I have attached a letter signed by 65 Mental Health Professionals from psychiatrists, psychologists, Licensed Social Workers, Licensed Family Marriage Therapist, Counselors, and others starting their support on TAHO 2.0. As mental health professionals we are seeing more cases of individuals being harassed by their landlords, and a stronger TAHO 2.0 is needed. As a public health professional, I have seen firsthand how landlord harassment leads to mental health issues that can leave lasting emotional damage. Harassment is traumatizing, and debilitating, and deprives individuals and families of the basic human right of having a safe place to call home. Landlord harassment is particularly hard on children, who may experience permanent psychological dysregulation due to elevated stress levels. Expecting children to focus on school when they're living with housing insecurity is a heavy burden that leaves long-term trauma, harms children's health, and disrupts their development. As a renter, I experienced firsthand how landlord harassment affects mental health. In August 2022, I came home to a three-day no-fault eviction notice posted on my front door. My landlord, who had just purchased the building, was claiming I violated my lease because I was using an area of the apartment as a second bedroom. But when I originally rented the unit in 2016, it was advertised as a two-bedroom unit, and the previous landlord had okayed this arrangement. As I awaited a court date for the eviction hearing, my landlord harassed me. She berated me, failed to provide rent payment acknowledgements, ignored requests for repairs, blocked my parking space as I was dealing with a physical disability, and made me get rid of my bed so I was

sleeping on the floor after just having had knee surgery. She also sent strangers to aggressively knock on my door late at night—this forced me to install security cameras, as I no longer felt safe in my home. You would think that as a mental health provider, I would have responded calmly. However, the harassment put me in a state of hypervigilance that affected my sleep, disrupted my nervous system, and led to paranoia. I sought out mental health services to help me cope—I had these resources available to me because of my profession. But many tenants going through similar experiences must do so without help, and wait for months before they're able to see a mental health provider. Mental health issues can be hard to diagnose, and treatment is often not billable under health insurance plans. And for households already struggling to pay rent, mental health care can be prohibitively expensive. Landlord harassment is a health crisis as much as it is a housing crisis. This is why provisions for mental health should be part of a robust tenant protection policy. As the City Council moves to amend the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance, they should include damages for emotional and mental distress. This will help strengthen deterrents for landlords who use harassment as an illegal eviction tactic to terrorize and force people to move out. More importantly, though, it will ensure tenants have access to the resources they need to help them cope, heal, and feel safe.

September 23, 2024

LA's Housing Crisis Is a Mental Health Crisis

Dear City of Los Angeles Council,

Los Angeles' renters are in mental health crisis due to the explosion in evictions since January. More than 30,000 evictions have been filed in Los Angeles County. And the rents have skyrocketed, making the cost of living unaffordable for many Angelenos -- many still carrying rent debt from the pandemic. And now the city is contending with an epidemic of landlord harassment, with more than 13,000 complaints filed with the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) over the past three years. In 2021, Los Angeles passed the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO) to follow up on landlord harassment, but the ordinance has so far been poorly enforced, with just two dozen cases referred to the City Attorney's office for prosecution.

In Summer 2023, the Keep LA Housed (KLAH) coalition began to advocate for changes to TAHO that would bring it in line with stronger laws in other cities, such as San Francisco and Oakland. Councilmember Nithya Raman introduced a motion in June 2024 that proposed KLAH's amendments. The motion passed out of the Housing Committee last month, but it did so with some of the changes that Councilmember Rodriguez added to weaken our amendments.

As mental health providers, advocates and other stakeholders committed to strengthening access to equitable, just, and fair mental and behavioral health care, we are writing to express our committed support for a stronger Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO). Landlord harassment is a health crisis as much as it is a housing crisis. This is why provisions for mental health should be part of a robust tenant protection policy. TAHO 2.0 will strengthen the behavioral health of those affected by their landlord, expand access to integrated care, improve telehealth options, provide important data, and take first steps toward expanding coverage for people in emotional distress due to the L.A housing crisis.

TAHO 2.0 comes at a critical time when the nation continues to struggle with housing and mental health crisis. When a landlord cannot legally evict a tenant, they may try and harass that tenant out. This might include posting unlawful eviction notices, reducing or eliminating services like parking or laundry, neglecting repairs, verbal or physical assault, or nuisance construction intended to disturb peace, quiet, and safety.

In addition to increases in prevalence, there continues to be gaps in access to needed care. According to the National Institutes of Health, in 2021-2022, among adults living with evictions, depression, anxiety, and psychotropic medication--for mental, emotional, or behavioral conditions--use was higher among those dealing with an eviction group compared to the non-risk group.

The motion's goal is not to target all landlords, but actual bad actors who are engaging in clear harassment of tenants.

Thus, we the undersigned ask the Los Angeles City Council to strengthen TAHO by ensuring the following amendments are included in the TAHO 2.0 motion:

- The tenants' right to request damages due to the landlord's infliction of mental and emotional harm
- The mandatory tripling of tenants' requested compensation in a harassment lawsuit
- The minimum penalty of \$2,000 imposed on landlords for each separate TAHO violation
- The tenants' ability to use harassment as a defense in an eviction case

Not making these changes to TAHO 2.0 would mean that a landlord will only owe a tenant money for harassment if the harassment results in property damage or physical harm, excluding the mental and emotional impact that landlord abuse has on tenants. They will also drastically reduce how much a tenant will be compensated for harassment, making harassment likelier to occur, and making it easier for landlords to evict tenants via harassment, thus aggravating the Los Angeles already existing housing crisis, and tenants' quality of life.

As mental health providers, we support TAHO 2.0 and look forward to working with the the City to build on these provisions and continue addressing the dire needs of individuals affected by the housing crisis and the mental health impacts caused by unsanctioned landlord harassment.

Los Angeles tenants needs a stronger TAHO that protects them, that is enforceable and deters and stops landlord harassment so that tenants can feel safe at home, and enjoy peace and quiet.

Sincerely,

**Note: This statement is endorsed by the undersigned individuals and organizations. It does not otherwise express the views or opinions of any specific entity.*

Marisol Granillo Arce, MSW, MPH, ACSW

Chris Datiles, LPCC #13266

Vilma Flores, MSW, ACSW

Mayra Perez, LCSW

Thomas Booth, LCSW

Dagan R. Bayliss, MSW

Sanam Mouradi AMFT

Melina Melgoza, M.Ed. Educator, Researcher, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Carlos Juarez, Substance Abuse Counselor, LAC DMH

Kiana Naimi, LCSW

Samantha Calvillo, LCSW

Carl Bolano ACSW

Matthew Mizel, Ph.D., Principal, JMJ Research and Consulting
Frances Gill, M.D., Psychiatrist
Vanessa Moreno MS
Jose Mendez, M.A., UCI School of Education
Naida Hennessey, Social Work Intern
Karen Carranza
Adrian Bacong, PhD, MPH
Gladis Chavez-Sosa, MPH
Tracey Thomas
J. Carlos Pulido
Michelle Seely, LMFT
Jennifer Murdocca, MA, MFT
Carlos Amador, MSW
Stella Chesler, LMFT
Lynne Jacobs, Ph.D.
Mary H. Siemes Silverman, Ph.D., clinical psychologist (private practice)
Patricia Duarte
Sherri Gerard, LCSW
Kathryn Heymann, LMFT96698
Laura Alongi LCSW
Doug Wilson, Psychologist
Nicole Vazquez, MSW, MPP
Sophie Morris
Allison Martinez, LCSW
Melanie Weinstein, Miracle Mile Resident, Filmmaker
Martha Sanchez, AMFT Casa de la Familia
Arnold Shir, UCLA Alumni
Haide Urbina
Vilma Vasquez
Ana Méndez Valencia, LCSW
Adriana Alejandre, LMFT, Latinx Therapy/ EMDR and Trauma Therapy Center
Linda Medrano
Cynthia Alonzo, LCSW
Haiza Martinez, ACSW
Cassandra Peterson-Solano, LCSW
Maria Berbeo, LMFT Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Katie Fishman, LCSW
Patricia Abrantes, LCSW
América Alaniz, LMFT
Mark Winitsky, Psy. D., LMFT
Janette Zuniga, MSW
Erika Zurflueh
Alicia Zamano LCSW

Lizet Upia

Sarah Homsy, MSW, ACSW

Emmanuel Chavez, Medical Student

Ana Guardady

Melina Paez, Resident

Ebonie Thompson- suffering tenant

Christina Ortega

James Green, LMFT

Miracle McKinney, ACCE D10 President, ECWA Area 1 Rep

Communication from Public

Name: Alejandro

Date Submitted: 09/23/2024 03:50 PM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: I am in support of the KLAH amendments to make TAHO stronger. Tenants have filed 13.000 complaints, only 4 fines have been made. A complete disaster on behalf of the city. Tenants need to be able to take landlords to court since clearly the city won't do it. These amendments will alleviate the weight on the city and will give more power to the tenants. Also I strongly encourage the Councilmembers to not support the anti-tenant amendments provided by Councilmember Monica Rodríguez and her landlord friends. They would take away the right to use emotional and mental damages in a TAHO lawsuit and takes a way the triple damages and 2k fines to prevent landlords from harassing tenants. She did not have an honest debate with the any of the other councilmembers in the H&H committee only one of them new an hour before that there were 18 new amendments and they had to vote on it right on the spot. That is not how you do an honest debate in a healthy democracy, specially after all the scandals of corruption that city hall has been dealing with. The more transparency and understanding the community and the councilmembers have on what they are voting on the better.

Communication from Public

Name: Julia
Date Submitted: 09/23/2024 05:10 PM
Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Julia Czarnota. I am commenting on agenda item number 30 and general comment. I live in Council District number 5. I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable - we are literally being harassed with lawsuits over something as important as housing. It is causing severe distress to tenants, I know this first hand. The level and type of stress amounts to trauma and our legal system must protect tenants from such harassment. I therefore urge you to please incorporate the following 4 key amendments into the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance if it is to do more than give false hope and actually protect tenants: Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO. More specifically and in addition to the above, I request the following as well: 1. The tenants' right to request damages due to the landlord's infliction of mental and emotional harm resulting from landlords harassment of tenant(s) 2. The mandatory tripling of tenants' requested compensation in a harassment lawsuit in order to both compensate more fairly the trauma resulting from enduring harassment over one's living space and as a punitive deterrent so that landlord's realize the hard their harassment does to tenants both short and long term in terms of mental health 3. The minimum penalty of \$2,000 imposed on landlords for each separate TAHO violation in order to deter landlord's from permanently scarring tenants mentally/emotionally, as well as causing homelessness and displacement due to the harassment that does in fact scare tenants out of their rental 4. The tenants' ability to use harassment as a defense in an eviction case as it has become evident that evictions are on the rise as a harassing tactic used by landlords to evict tenants in order to be able to re-rent apartments the landlord successfully harassed a tenant out of at market rate, for what is often a passive income for the landlord that already put the landlord in a high income bracket while displaced tenants cannot afford a market rate apartment and thus fall into homelessness. What is the landlord's cash cow, one that only grows, inversely is

tenant's slippery slope into homelessness. If public policy does not reign in on landlord greed, we will fall further into a dystopian reality. Share your personal story here: I am currently on my soon to be 4th UD that takes up considerable time, taking me away from hobbies and growth, in order to fight nothing but lies. During the pandemic and shortly after, my landlord literally got in the way of me working so I could pay rent. The harassment is ridiculous, it is covert and always when no witnesses are around, and they take advantage of the right to sue law in California

Communication from Public

Name: Kathleen Parente

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 09:23 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Kathleen Parente. I am commenting on agenda item #30 and general comment. I live in district #14 in DTLA and I am a member of LA CAN. I am urging council members to vote yes and pass TAHO today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. Furthermore, the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments. 1. Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance. 2. Institute triple damages when landlords (and management) willfully engage in harassment. 3. Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages. 4. Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings. Without consequences for landlords and their agents they have continued endlessly to harass tenants and ignore TAHO. I have filed complaints about harassment at 1624 S. HOPE St. The landlords and particularly management have requested entry at least 100 times in less than a year. Often companies don't show up. But I gave to miss Dr's. Apps grocery shopping, dentists and family because of constant requests to enter my apartment. The endless gaslighting and passive aggressive behavior makes my life chaotic. Tenants at the Carver have been locked out of the kitchen weekends, holidays and every weekday after 4:30 p.m. The kitchen is in our lease to stay open from 7:30a.m. to midnight. The tenant reading and T.V. room locked for a year and a half. Also, in the lease to stay open. The list goes on and on. I am a human being owning rent here on time for 25 years now. I am not a prisoner, a convict or an idiot but management treats us this way.

Communication from Public

Name: Karen

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 09:59 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Karen. I am commenting on agenda item number 30 and general comment. I live in Council District number 9 (Council District #). I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. Furthermore, the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO. Tenant are being unfairly harassed to leave their homes some of them have 20+ year living in those homes. I am seeing a lot of harassment for tenants living in RSO unit most being demolished because of the ED1 order. Although this is approved by the city to built affordable housing landlords NEED to respect the process without pressuring tenants to leave the premise simply because they want to expedite construction. The ED1 is really harming tenants and its making their life very traumatic with landlord harassment. YOU need to take ACTION for the most vulnerable population.

Communication from Public

Name: Val

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 10:20 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Val, and I live in Venice Beach, Council District #11. I am standing before you today to ask you to vote YES and pass the TAHO as amended by the Housing and Homeless Committee. The current version is weak and unenforceable, leaving tenants without proper protection. I've personally experienced the harm that comes when landlords feel emboldened by weak enforcement. The RSO housing unit I live in was recently sold, and the new owner has made it very clear that he wants me out. He has repeatedly, from day one, coerced me to accept his cash-for-keys offer and, at one point, even falsely claimed he was moving in a family member. By sheer luck, I managed to speak with an attorney a week before my move-out date who urged me to challenge the "moving in a family member" claim and advised me to fight back. Their counsel didn't come gratis, but it was a lifeline. Without it, I'd have been forced out of my home and ripped from the community I've worked so hard to be a part of. This wasn't just about a place to live; it was about the survival of everything I've built. More recently, in July of this year, he returned with a fourth buyout offer, this time suggesting that he would invoke the Ellis Act if I refused. He also posted a sign on my door announcing a 'reduction of services'-removing access to the laundry facility and offering a meager \$60 rent reduction. It is exhausting being on the receiving end of landlord harassment. We NEED to get tougher tenant harassment protection laws. We NEED a more robust system in place that will discourage landlords from harassing their tenants. Honorable Council members, I urge you to please pass the amendment for the sake of thousands of tenants who need the type of protection it provides. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Angela Birdsong

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 10:30 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Greetings, My name is Angela Birdsong and I am commenting on agenda item number 30 and general comment. I am a housing rights organizer for Los Angeles Community Action Network better known as LA CAN. I work in Council District 14, and I reside in the city of Inglewood, a close neighbor of the city of Los Angeles, and I am a landlord in Hermosa Beach. I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today as amended by the Housing and Homeless Committee. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. Furthermore, the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: 1. Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance 2. Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment 3. Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages 4. Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO. Landlords ignore TAHO in Skid Row constantly despite HACLA (Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles) withholding its portion of the subsidized rent when the unit does not pass inspection and re-inspection. Landlords ignore when the Los Angeles Housing Department writes citations for elevators not working for 3 weeks leaving tenants who use wheelchairs stuck on their floors or out of their buildings for those 3 weeks. This elevator issue happened at SP7 Apartments on San Pedro and 7th Street to two of our LA CAN's members: Mr. Tyrone Rucker and Mr. Kay C Porter. Can you imagine the mental and emotional distress these two gentlemen experienced and are experiencing? Landlords must be held accountable and responsible! Please vote yes and TAHO making it stronger and enforceable. Thank you

Communication from Public

Name: Tania Ramon

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 10:52 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Tania Ramon and I am commenting on agenda item number 30 and general comment. I live in Council District number 10 and I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. Furthermore, the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO. Having experienced harassment from my landlord has impacted me because on multiple occasions since my landlord has refused to make repairs in my home, such as refusing to fix the lock of my building's front entrance which puts my neighbors and myself at risk everyday.

Communication from Public

Name: Pamela Agustin

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 11:02 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. The Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO.

Communication from Public

Name: Mariana Luna

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 11:11 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Mariana Luna. I am commenting on agenda item number 30 and general comment. I live in Council District number 9. I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass TAHO today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. Furthermore, the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO. I have personally seen dozens of tenants face harassment, including physical assault, emotional and psychological damage, and property damage. I urge you to prioritize the health and wellbeing on tenants by passing these amendments.

Communication from Public

Name: Ryan Bell

Date Submitted: 09/24/2024 09:36 AM

Council File No: 14-0268-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Hi, my name is Ryan Bell. I am the Southern California Coordinator for the statewide non-profit Tenants Together and I'm writing about agenda item number 30. I am urging all Council members today to vote YES and pass these changes to the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO) today. The current TAHO is weak and unenforceable. Furthermore, the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance must include 4 key amendments: 1. Ensure landlords are fined when they are found in violation of the ordinance 2. Institute triple damages when landlords willfully engage in harassment. This is a common feature of many ordinances 3. Must include remedies for tenants such as emotional damages 4. Create affirmative defenses in eviction proceedings Without consequences for harassment, landlords will continue to ignore TAHO. In my work I talk with and support tenants on an almost daily basis and tenants tell me about every imaginable form of harassment. My recent experience includes repeated frivolous 3-day notices, removal of essential services including shutting off utilities, entering their unit without warning or notice, video cameras pointed into the tenants private space, accusations of criminal behavior, threats of reporting to ICE, threats of other lawsuits, and much more. Tenants who are experiencing harassment live in constant fear *in their own home* where they should feel safe. Tenants who are experiencing harassment also avoid requesting needed repairs for fear of dealing with the landlord. Harassment has a chilling effect, at best, and keeps tenants living in unsafe and uninhabitable conditions. Ultimately, unchecked harassment can make tenants leave their units where they may have had rent control and leads to increased homelessness and unstable housing conditions. Please vote yes on TAHO including these four amendments noted above! Thank you!