



TENANTS TOGETHER

California's Statewide Organization for Renters' Rights

Spring 2012

U.S. Supreme Court Leaves Rent Control Laws Intact

In a closely watched court case, the U.S. Supreme Court has declined a landlord's invitation to overturn rent control laws. If granted, review would have jeopardized rent control laws across the country, including many California cities.

The case involved a New York landlord who claimed that the city's rent control law was unconstitutional because it denied him a fair rate of return on the property. His legal argument was flawed and similar arguments have been rejected by the courts. Supreme Court precedent has long upheld government's power to pass reasonable regulations of property, including rent control laws. In *Block v. Hirsh*, a 1921 case, the U.S. Supreme Court case upheld a rent control law in Washington D.C. that was passed in the wake of World War I. Most recently, in 2005, the Court upheld a Hawaii rent control law.

The clear legal precedent has not stopped property rights zealots from trying to reargue the issue. Emboldened by Citizens United and other recent Supreme Court rulings in

which the conservative court has turned settled law upside down, landlords were thrilled when the Supreme Court was asked to grant review of the *Harmon v. Kimmel* case. The national media created buzz by publishing stories and opinion pieces calling for the Supreme Court to become a super-legislator and overturn duly adopted rent control laws.

In April, the Supreme Court denied the petition for review. The landlord's rent control challenge is dead, as it should be.

It is ironic when landlords complain of rent control laws in cities like New York. Property values have soared in cities with rent control. The same landlords who complain that they are being denied a "fair return" on their investment knew about the rent control laws when they

bought the property and have seen their property values increase exponentially under rent control.

Rent control ensures stability for families and a fair rate of return for landlords. It's too

bad we need to re-litigate this issue again and again, but at least this time, rent control scored a resounding victory.



100+ cities in the United States have rent control laws.
12 cities in California have rent control for apartments.
96 cities in California have rent control for mobilehomes.
32 states have banned rent control.

TT Members Pass Central Valley's 1st Tenant Protection Law: Chapter Forms to Continue Momentum



Blake, and former councilmember John Carlisle. As Councilmember Blake said repeatedly about our proposed law, "It's good policy, and it's the moral thing to do."

But special interests are already challenging the Just Cause law. In an unprecedented move, newly elected Mayor Stan Thurston has made repealing the recently adopted ordinance a top priority. At the urging of realtors, the Mayor began proceedings to repeal the law even before it took effect. Tenants Together has been fighting the repeal efforts. So far, the law remains in effect, but tenants will need to be vigilant to preserve these hard won rights in Merced.

In less than a year, a determined group of tenants in Merced, CA mobilized to stop bank evictions after foreclosure. Our members in Merced successfully advocated for the City to pass a just cause for eviction ordinance, the first tenant protection law ever passed in the entire Central Valley of California. Now banks and investors cannot evict Merced renters simply because their landlord went into foreclosure.

Tenants Together would like to thank the following city council members for their unwavering support: Mayor Pro Tem Noah Lor, Councilmembers Mary Michal Rawling and Bill

What's Inside

- Member Highlights p. 2
- Member Spotlight. p. 3
- Working for Tenants Rights p. 4
- Hotline Happy Endings. p. 5
- Access to Courts p. 6
- Local Highlights p. 8
- Legislative/Court Watch p. 9
- Guest Editorial. p. 10
- Membership Form p. 12

MEMBERS WORKING FOR TENANTS' RIGHTS

In partnership with 24 member organizations, Tenants Together is leading efforts to protect and expand renters' rights across the state.

Our Member Organizations in Action!



Inner City Law Center expands 1/2012



Asian Law Caucus helps recover \$300,000 in wage theft case. 2/2012



Housing Rights Committee of SF at US Bank Action 4/2012



Causa Justa::Just Cause at Wells Fargo Shareholder Action 4/2012



Coalition for Economic Survival Rally to call out Jones & Jones Mgmt Co. 3/2012



SF Occupy Housing Event: December 2011

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Movita Thomas, Antioch -- Contra Costa County

Movita Thomas knew she had the right to a home free of roaches, but she was having trouble convincing her landlord to do something about an infestation that had reached epic proportions. She didn't want her grandchildren to visit, because she was afraid the roaches would crawl on them.

Over the course of a year, Ms. Thomas made numerous attempts to press the building management to address the problem. She tried to find help on her own, but each person she called referred her to someone new.

"I didn't know I had rights. It seemed like the landlord had all the rights," she said. "Instead of telling us he would take care of things or help us, he started getting negative, telling us we could be evicted."

Tenants Together hears this story all too often, landlords who let properties fall into dismal conditions and refuse to fix things. Still, Ms. Thomas persevered, but after being passed from person to person, she was about to give up.

The turning point came when Ms. Thomas's husband brought home a flyer advertising a Tenants Together meet-up. She was tempted not to bother but, she said, "I decided to go to that meeting. And things started to change for me."

TT Organizer Giti Dadlani and Legal Director Leah Simon-Weisberg had organized the meet-up to connect with Contra Costa County tenants in danger of being evicted

Tenants Together works with our individual members to empower them to know and assert their rights.

due to an owner's foreclosure. They also answered general tenant questions from attendees.

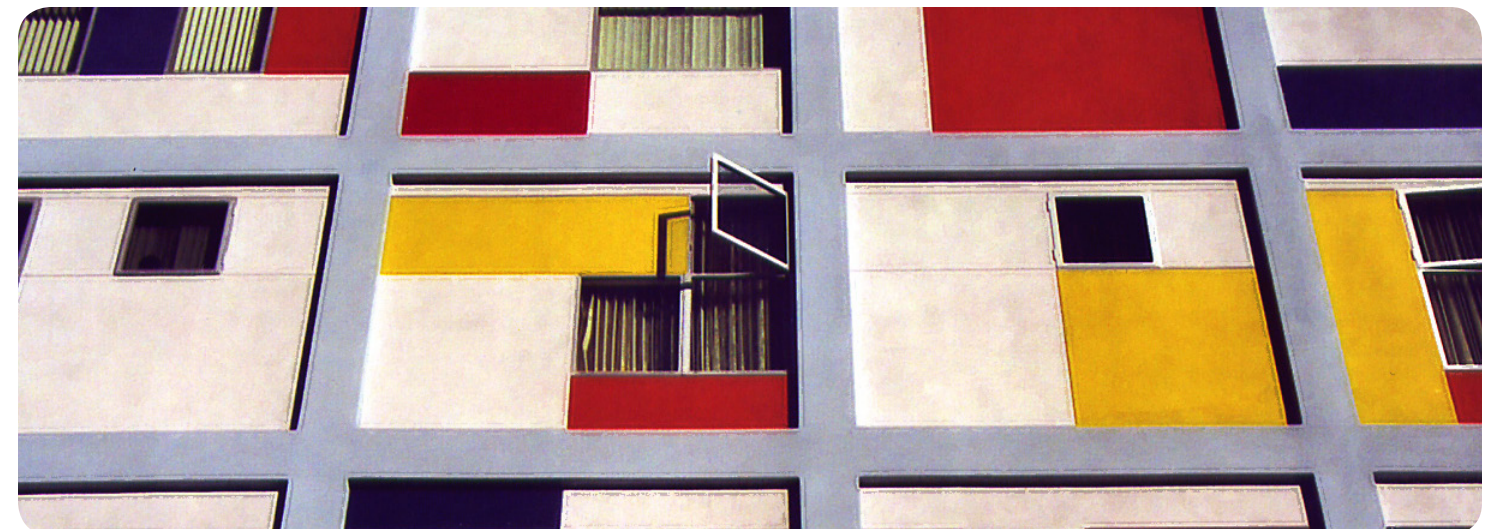
At that meet-up, Ms. Thomas learned that tenants have the right to decent living conditions. "Giti told me I deserved to feel comfortable in my home," Ms. Thomas said.

Giti told Ms. Thomas to document all the issues with the apartment, keep copies of all correspondence she had with building management, and contact city inspectors.

Within a month of Ms. Thomas's contacting the City of Antioch to report uninhabitable conditions, the landlord sent an exterminator to spray the unit. This did not solve the problem, because the whole 24-unit building was infested.

Armed with information and confidence that she gained from talking to Giti, Ms. Thomas was inspired to call a meeting with her neighbors to discuss all the issues they had with the apartment building and the property management. Roaches were the No. 1 concern.

The residents were able to pressure management to address the problem correctly, and now they are all living roach-free. Throughout the process, Ms. Thomas worked closely with Tenants Together, receiving encouragement, support, and coaching on actions to take. She said that without TT, things would not have changed. We commend Ms. Thomas for her courage.



Members, send us your photos of recent actions and events! Email aimee@tenantstogether.org

New Staff at Tenants Together!



Organizer: Guillermo Elenes
Before joining TT, Guillermo worked on ACCE's Home Defenders campaign in Oakland and as a field organizer for Organizing for America and other political campaigns. Guillermo has worked in San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles and Oakland, giving him a multi-regional perspective that will serve him well here. He's already off and activating members in Merced, Concord, Fresno, and more.



Hotline/Volunteer Coordinator: Aimee Inglis
Aimee volunteered on the foreclosure hotline for over a year before joining the staff team. She hails from Orange County and got her feet wet on housing issues as an intern with the Kennedy Commission. For four years post-graduation from UC Irvine she managed volunteers and community organizing efforts at anti-poverty orgs. She is excited to expand TT's capacity to involve volunteers in the fight for renters rights.



Admin Assistant: Aileen Joy
Aileen recently graduated from UC Santa Cruz and moved back to the SF Bay Area, where she was raised. Following in the footsteps of her parents, she has worked with a number of community organizations (alternately as volunteer, intern and staff member), focusing on issues as diverse as mental health, sustainable agriculture and publishing. Her love of her local community has motivated her to want to protect the right to safe, just communities for all people.

Meet-ups & TAGs:
Building Blocks for Local TT Organizing Efforts

Tenants Together members across the state are hosting meet-ups in their communities. We've worked with members to host meet-ups in Antioch, Fresno, Sacramento and other communities. These meet-ups are a great opportunity for renters to meet each other and learn about their rights and how to get involved.

Merced is an example of just how powerful these meet-ups can be. In the fall of 2010, a determined group of renters in Merced met with our organizer. A city of 60% renters, Merced had no tenant protection laws on the books. Meanwhile, banks were foreclosing on rental properties and kicking out tenants at an alarming rate. After a series of meetings and outreach efforts, our members successfully advocated for local Just Cause for Eviction law to stop these evictions, the first such law in the Central Valley. TT members in Merced now meet monthly to build power, strategize, and share stories.

At these informal meetings, members engage in great discussions. Topics range from brainstorming new outreach ideas to taking on bad landlords to passing local tenant protection laws. We call these groups Tenant Action Groups (TAGs). The TAGs decide what issues to pursue locally, and work with our organizer to make things happen.

If you are interested in joining or starting a TAG in your area, contact our organizer, Guillermo Elenes, at guillermo@tenantstogether.org.



The Swishers of Lone, CA

Thirty-four weeks pregnant, Stephanie Swisher, her husband and 9-year-old son moved into a single-family home in Lone, a town just outside of Sacramento. They were excited to settle into a new home well in advance of their baby's arrival.

Then, two weeks after providing a deposit and paying the first month's rent, the Swishers found a Notice of Trustee Sale on their door. This meant that their landlord of less than two weeks was facing foreclosure in just a few weeks more. It was unsettling, heartbreaking news for the family.

And the plot thickened. It turned out that the owner, Phillip Scantling, did not know the property was being rented at all, let alone to the Swishers. Mr. Scantling had paid a company located in Washington State to help him prevent the pending foreclosure. He signed a "General Assignment and Power of Attorney" with Home Advocate Trustees, not realizing that in the small print and legalese, the document gave the company the right to lease out the property, which the company did—and pocketed the rent.

Meanwhile, Home Advocates Trustees failed to respond to numerous emails from the Swishers, and as the foreclosure approached, the family became increasingly fearful that they soon would be evicted.

Luckily, Stephanie Swisher contacted Tenants Together and learned that her family had the right to stay in their home until the end of their lease.

Home Advocates Trustees did eventually respond to the Swishers, but only to illegally seek rent and late fees for a time period after the foreclosure occurred—that is, when their client Mr. Scantling no longer owned the house. Armed with the accurate date of the foreclosure and clarity regarding their rights, the Swishers pushed back, and Home Advocates Trustees acknowledged it had no right to collect rent. The company stopped harassing the Swishers but failed to return their security deposit.

Soon after the foreclosure, the family was contacted by agents representing the bank that then owned the property. The agents demanded documentation of the family's tenancy and misinformed them that they would have to move. Stephanie Swisher again called Tenants Together, and we reached out to Fannie Mae leadership and demanded that the bank follow its own national policy regarding tenants in foreclosed properties. The bank accepted the Swishers' two-year lease, made necessary repairs, and the family is happy again in their home.

Tenants Together is here to help you. If you are being harassed or ignored by bank or real estate agents, call our Tenant Foreclosure Hotline: 888-495-8020.

Tenant Foreclosure Hotline Update

Tenants Together has been at the forefront of efforts to address the plight of tenants in foreclosed properties. Tenants are the hidden victims of the foreclosure crisis and have been largely ignored by the media and policymakers. Our research shows that at least 38 percent of all foreclosed units in California are inhabited by renters. When banks take over these properties, tenants face a host of problems, such as utility shutoffs, lock-outs, unfair evictions and loss of security deposits.

TT's Tenant Foreclosure Hotline – the only hotline of its kind for tenants in California – continues to provide a crucial service for tenants. We have assisted over 7,000 tenants across the state since 2009. In the future we are looking to expand our capacity to counsel renters, including the recruitment of more bilingual English/Spanish volunteer counselors.



**TENANT FORECLOSURE
HOTLINE**

To contact the Tenant Foreclosure Hotline, call 888-495-8020
or visit www.tenantstogether.org/hotlineintake

Our Legal Director's Analysis of the Shriver Project

Access to an attorney is the largest determiner of whether a tenant can obtain a positive result in an unlawful detainer. Tenants have never had anything close to adequate access to affordable legal assistance to avoid illegal evictions and enforce their rights. In 1981, the Legal Service Corporation (LSC) was only able to fund one attorney per 5,000 low-income persons. In 2011, there was less than one attorney per 20,000 low-income persons.

In response to the recession, legal service organizations around the country received funding as part of the stimulus package through a program called Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Programs. (HPRP) Legal services organizations were provided money to hire attorneys to represent tenants and prevent evictions. As part of the project, social service agencies were given funds to provide money for rent and security deposits in order to keep tenants housed. The program lasted two years and ended in 2011.

In addition to losing the HPRP funding, the Legal Service Corporation's budget was reduced for the 2012 year by 72 million dollars. Resulting in significant cuts to legal aid offices across the country.

However, there might be some good news for tenants facing eviction. Five communities across California have received funding to increase assistance for tenants facing eviction. The brain child of Assemblymember Mike Feuer, the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act, a nationally-significant pilot project, began October 2011 to assure parties equal access to justice when their basic necessities of life are at stake, and to improve court efficiency at a time when the judicial system must make do with less.

Sacramento, Los Angeles, Bakersfield, San Diego and Santa Barbara were awarded a total of 9.5 million dollars per year for three years. Each project implements a slightly different approach to improving access to legal services. It is hoped that through the project an ideal model can be tested and then applied to future programs.

The project in Los Angeles, largest of the five, includes the collaboration of the majority of the non-profit legal service providers in the city of Los Angeles: Inner City Law Center, Neighborhood Legal Services, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and Public Counsel. At the center of the project is the creation of a new entity that has been named Eviction Assistance Center (EAC).

Five communities across California have received funding to increase assistance for tenants facing eviction.

All unrepresented and indigent tenants being evicted through the Stanley Mosk Superior Court, located in downtown Los Angeles, are encouraged to

obtain assistance initially at the Eviction Assistance Center. At the EAC, tenants can obtain a responsive pleading and will be assessed for representation. Meritorious cases will be sent to one of the participating organizations to receive full scope representation.

Cases that are not placed at one of the participating organizations as part of the project will still receive referrals to other free and low-bono services. This includes Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles's clinic to assist tenants who represent themselves. The vision is to significantly increase the number of tenants who receive full scope representation when facing a landlord who is represented. The goal of the project is to assist 5,000 litigants in Unlawful Detainers, with at least 2000 receiving full scope representation.

"This law helps ensure essential legal rights are not sacrificed simply because someone cannot afford to hire a private lawyer"
- Assemblymember Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles)

Santa Barbara and Sacramento have similar programs which attempt to increase the number of litigants that receive representation.

Sacramento's program also includes a developed mediation program. In order to receive assistance, tenants should contact the participating organizations normal intake contact numbers. These can be found at tenantstogether.org/directory.

The Shriver Project should be closely watched. It is an exciting opportunity. How it performs and is assessed will have a significant impact on the future of the availability of representation for tenants across California.

Tenants Together is committed to promoting access to legal representation for tenants across the state.

TT Forms Tenant Lawyer Network of California

At our January training of 100 tenant advocates and lawyers, we announced the formation of California's only statewide network of lawyers dedicated to representing tenants. Some of the strongest supporters of tenants' rights in California are tenant attorneys. Whether in private practice or at nonprofit organizations, these attorneys play an important role in championing the rights of tenants on a daily basis. To support, encourage and promote their work, we are launching our Tenant Lawyer Network of California. Interested tenant attorneys should send an email to lawyernetwork@tenantstogether.org.

If you are a tenant looking for a lawyer, visit our website tenantstogether.org/tln for our Tenant Lawyer Network list.



Ken Greenstein of Greenstein & McDonald, Tenant Lawyer Network member



Tenant Advisory: Eviction Assistance Websites

Tenants Together is regularly contacted by tenants whose landlords are facing foreclosure. These tenants are often searching for attorneys to represent them in eviction cases resulting from their landlord's foreclosure. Regrettably, many communities do not have a well-developed tenant bar, and local legal aid organizations are often unable to meet the overwhelming numbers of tenants seeking representation.

This vacuum has led tenants to websites that offer services in pro per. (Pro per is when a person represents themselves in a legal action.) These websites advertise—sometimes for extraordinarily high prices—the preparation of basic legal paperwork. The potential tenant-client is often told that she will be able to stay in her home for several months because of the documents she is sold. These websites fail to inform tenants that they generally have the right to stay in their homes for 90 days or longer after foreclosure regardless of the paperwork that is filed, and that they have the right to contest the eviction in court after the notice expires, which can take over a month.

Tenants Together has written some basic guidelines on how to determine if the service you are paying for is legitimate and whether you are paying for something that you could get for free, simply by going to your local self-help center. Go to www.tenantstogether.org for these guidelines.

LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

LOS ANGELES

Coalition for Economic Survival and Bet Tzedek Legal Services take on landlord's online only payment scheme

The L.A. City Council's Housing, Community Economic and Development (HCED) Committee unanimously voted on April 16, 2012 in support of a motion by Councilmember Paul Krekorian to prohibit landlords from requiring that their tenants pay their rent only online. The motion is similar to a pending state bill, SB 1055, introduced by California State Senator Ted Lieu (D-Torrance) that would require landlords throughout the state to continue to accept rent by check or money order.

SAN FRANCISCO



Tuesday, April 24th at Wells Fargo shareholder meeting: national action against the banks foreclosure policies. Labor, homeowner & tenants rights groups, including Tenants Together, participated.

OCEANSIDE

Tenants in mobile home parks defend rent control

Last year, Oceanside City Council voted to eliminate rent control in mobile home parks and replace it with so-called vacancy decontrol. (Mobile home owners own their homes but must rent the space where the homes are installed.) Residents immediately took action and collected 15,000 signatures to direct the council to rescind the decision or send the question to voters. Because the council did not repeal its decision, in June Oceanside voters will decide the fate of mobile home park rent-control. The decision has implications beyond mobile home parks and beyond Oceanside. Over recent years we have seen this battle emerge in cities across the state: Capitola, Calimesa, American Canyon, Goleta and Thousand Oaks to name a few.

Tenants Together supports the struggle of our allies in mobile home parks to preserve affordable housing.

SACRAMENTO

Condo tenants sue over outrageous raid by security guards

Nine condo residents filed a lawsuit after Taser-toting private security guards burst into their homes at 3 a.m. and assaulted them, forcing them into the street in their underwear, after a foreclosure the residents had never been informed of. The guards accused the plaintiffs of being "squatters," though none of them were aware of the foreclosure action against the building and none had received service of an eviction lawsuit. On April 30, 2011, defendants allegedly came onto plaintiffs' residence, uninvited, at approximately between 3 a.m. and 3:30 a.m., performing a military style raid of plaintiffs' residence. The tenants were told they were trespassers and were threatened with arrest.

MERCED

Tenants' rights bus placards posted

Merced County buses are displaying renters' rights information for the first time. The Merced County Transit agency has posted renters' rights placards in 80 buses. The placards will remain posted for six months, according to the agency. Provided at no cost to the county by Tenants Together. The placards invite Merced renters to call our free hotline for help with their housing issues.

"We welcome this effort by the transit agency to make sure tenants know their rights," said Angela Fragulia, a leader of Merced Tenants Together, a local chapter of Tenants Together. Tenants Together is urging other transit agencies to post similar signs advising transit riders of their rights as renters.

FRESNO

Fresno assessor takes a stand for renters



Fresno County Assessor, Paul Dictos, CPA, has announced an important initiative to assist tenants in foreclosed properties. Dictos will begin mailing know-your-rights material to tenants and homeowners in pre-foreclosure properties. Dictos is the first assessor in the Central Valley (and one of the first in the state) to take this pro-active approach to protecting residents of properties heading into foreclosure. TT commends Assessor Dictos for taking action to make sure that tenants in Fresno county are not mistreated.

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES & COURT WATCH

Tenants Together monitors tenant-related legislation in Sacramento, as well as the development of landlord-tenant case law. Here's a summary of key issues in state government and in the court system that affect tenants. Be sure to check out our website and sign up for regular email updates.

2012 Legislation

AB 1953: Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco)

Sponsored by Tenants Together, this bill would prohibit evictions for rent accrued after a change of ownership when the owner failed to provide proper notice to tenants of the ownership. The bill would stop the situation where new owners, including banks after foreclosure, take over property and after many months suddenly demand all back rent with a three day eviction notice.

AB 1925 Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco)

Sponsored by the California Apartment Association, this bill would limit compensation to San Francisco tenants in rent-controlled units who are displaced for less than 20 days to \$275/day plus moving costs.

AB 2610: Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley)

SB 1472: Loni Hancock (D-Oakland)

Sponsored by the California Attorney General, these bills would remove the sunset on existing state protections for tenants after foreclosure and extend the eviction notice period under state law from 60 to 90 days. The bill would also provide state law protection for leases after foreclosure.

AB 2521: Bob Blumenfield (D-San Fernando Valley)

This bill would raise the safe harbor amount for landlords to keep abandoned tenant property without doing a public sale from \$300 to \$700. The bill would also permit a tenant to reclaim property within 48 hours of vacating without paying any charges.

SB 1055: Ted Lieu (D-Torrance)

This bill would prohibit a landlord from requiring online payment as the exclusive form of rent payment.

SB 1191: Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto)

This bill would require landlords of 1-4 unit properties to disclose to prospective tenants that the property has a notice of default filed against it and provide remedies to tenants when disclosure is not provided.

SB 1229: Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills)

This bill would prohibit landlords from requiring that tenants' pets be declawed or debarked. Former Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed a similar bill.

Court Cases

Anchor Pacifica Management v. Green

Good Cause Required to Evict from City Subsidized Complex
California Court of Appeal ruled that a management company operating a senior apartment complex developed with assistance from a local redevelopment agency and must have good cause when it evicts a tenant upon expiration of the tenants' lease. The ruling extends eviction protections granted to tenants of state funded units to those living in city-subsidized projects.

Crisales v. Estrada

Court Stops Evictions Through Section 8 Terminations

The Appellate Division of the L.A. Superior Court held that Section 8 tenants are protected by L.A.'s Just Cause eviction protections when landlords attempt to terminate their Section 8 voucher program contract. The case follows similar unpublished rulings. Advocates in Just Cause jurisdictions across the state will be able to cite this case as precedent to stop landlords from evicting tenants by terminating Section 8 contracts.

PNMAC Mortgage v. Stanko

Court rejects 3-day nonpayment eviction notice in post-foreclosure context

Santa Monica trial court held that a post-foreclosure owner must serve bona fide tenants a 90-day notice to quit under the federal Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act, even if the eviction is based on non-payment of rent, which would otherwise allow eviction on 3-day notice under state law. The ruling follows a recent Massachusetts decision with similar reasoning.

Fair Housing Council of San Fernando Valley v. Roommate.com

9th Circuit allows roommate discrimination

The Ninth Circuit concluded there was no violation of state or federal fair housing laws for a roommate-matching service that places ads inviting discrimination against protected classes. The ruling was based on the right to association/privacy.

California Redevelopment Assoc. v. Matosantos

Cal. Supreme Court upholds Legislature's power to terminate redevelopment agencies

The California Supreme Court upheld legislation to terminate California's redevelopment agencies.

JUST IN TIME

By Deepa Varma

I was in the office on a Saturday. That by itself, was not unusual- the Eviction Defense Collaborative is always short staffed and overworked, but that week, in early October, we'd just been talking about losing staff and shrinking our services. I'd survived cuts and hiring freezes in other agencies since the crash in 2008, but the aftershocks of the financial crisis had finally pushed far enough into the legal services world to make my own job tenuous.

It wasn't any of this that made me want to cry. I was reviewing a stack of cases, twice as large as it had been in previous years, or even months, making notes for volunteers who were going to try to help folks settle their eviction disputes and avoid trial. "Income source: unemployment only, can no longer afford rent." "Let tenant know that her goal of staying is unrealistic." "Foreclosed homeowner- no defenses." Or even worse, "Foreclosed tenant-no rent saved, no proof of rental agreement." Given the extreme shortage of affordable housing in San Francisco, I found myself thinking about referrals to shelters. I paused, thinking that even this might well be an exercise in futility for many of our clients. The cuts have hit our city in every sector, and there are record six-month waitlists for families to get into homeless shelters, and a complete lack of emergency housing for the elderly and incapacitated homeless. I began to wonder if burnout is the name for the moment when you turn your compassion into impatience and boredom just to save your sanity.

And then I heard it. A roar of voices rising in the street, twelve stories below. From that distance, no one could possibly hear a coherent message, only a multitude of angry, hopeful, and powerful people. I only looked out the window at them for a second before bolting for the door.

I reach the ground floor, now running, out of the elevator, through the glass double doors and into the roaring crowd. We are just a swirling mass of enthusiasm, and optimism and cardboard signs. I bump into Diamond Dave. He says, "Good to see you, sister. Great weather for camping tonight." In front of me is a woman holding a sign saying "99%... I like those odds." I turn around to take a picture, and the sign in front of me just says- "This is the beginning..."

-Deepa Varma is a staff attorney at the Eviction Defense Collaborative in San Francisco, and a member of the Occupy SF Housing Coalition.



ABOUT TENANTS TOGETHER

We are California's only statewide tenant rights organization, uniting individual tenants, tenant organizations, and other allies in the struggle for fairness and justice for California's estimated 15 million renters. Tenants are disproportionately low-income people, seniors, students, immigrants, and people of color who are struggling for daily survival. Through education, organizing, and advocacy, we work to galvanize a statewide movement for renters' rights.

BOARD

Steve Collier (Board President) - Tenderloin Housing Clinic*
 Gen Fujioka - Chinatown Community Development Center*
 María Guadalupe Arreola - San Francisco Human Rights Commission*
 Larry Gross - Coalition for Economic Survival*
 Ted Gullicksen - San Francisco Tenants Union*
 Michelle Kezirian - Bet Tzedek Legal Services*
 Pahoua Lor - Central California Legal Services*

STAFF

Dean Preston Executive Director
 Leah Simon-Weisberg Legal Director
 Guillermo Elenes Organizer
 Aileen Joy Administrative Assistant
 Aimee Inglis Hotline/Volunteer Coordinator



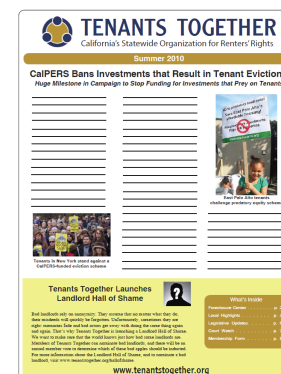
*For identification purposes only

OUR VOLUNTEERS

On behalf of all our members, Tenants Together would like to thank our team of committed volunteers who generously donate their time to our cause:

Sam Davidson	Scott Mayhew
Ryan Murphy	Vickie Martin
Janet Choi	Waqas Khan
Jeff Ogorek	Bob Mason
Jose Lua-Valencia	Allison Brennan
Kari Rudd	Taylor Pospichel
Peter Stark	Judy Golden
Roy Park	Meghan McSweeney
Samlecia Gaye	Keisha Adams

This is the sixth issue of the Tenants Together newsletter.



To access archived publications, visit www.tenants-together.org or call our office at 415-495-8100 to receive a copy via US Mail.

SPECIAL THANKS

Tenants Together would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their very generous support:

The San Francisco Foundation
 Milstein Adelman LLP
 Greenstein & McDonald
 The Elkes Foundation
 Law Offices of Richard Hurlburt
 Mohamed Ibrahim
 Peretz & Associates
 Law Offices of Eric L. Lifschitz
 Litt, Estuar & Kitson, LLP
 Michelle Kezirian
 Randy Shaw
 Law Offices of J. Wallace Oman
 Westley Law Office

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Thanks to each of our current member organizations for their work to strengthen tenant rights in California!

Affordable Housing Advocates
 Asian Law Alliance
 Asian Law Caucus
 California Affordable Housing Law Project
 Causa Justa :: Just Cause
 Coalition for Economic Survival
 Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
 Eviction Defense Center (Oakland)
 Eviction Defense Collaborative (San Francisco)
 Eviction Defense Network (Los Angeles)
 Fair Housing Council of Riverside County
 Fair Rent Coalition
 Grassroots Leadership Network of Marin
 Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco
 Inner City Law Center
 Isla Vista Tenants Union
 Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County
 Legal Assistance to the Elderly
 National Housing Law Project
 San Francisco Tenants Union
 Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights
 Sunny Acres Residents Association
 Tenants Legal Center of San Diego
 Tenderloin Housing Clinic

