



**TENANTS
TOGETHER**

California's
Statewide Organization
for Renters' Rights

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday June 27th, 2016

Contact: Eduardo Torres, Tenants Together East Bay Organizer
cell: 925-726-5172

Tenants Rally for Rent Control & Just Cause to Protect Against Slumlords

Concord, CA -- Today at 4:30pm at City Hall, Concord tenants are gathering with their community to ask the city to pass policy solutions like rent control and just cause in response to rising rents and evictions. Four of the tenant-leaders have been fighting slumlord Steven Pinza for repairs and fair rents, and are now being evicted by Pinza. Tenants Together, California's statewide organization for renters' rights, has been assisting the tenants. There will be a rally and press conference at 4:30pm in advance of the 5:30pm Concord city council meeting to discuss rent control and just cause policies.

The four tenants being evicted by Pinza are Olga Chan, Feliciano Puerto, Gloria Ayala, and Juan Carlos Mendoza. Pinza is a slumlord that is retaliating against tenants that stand up and demand he make quality repairs to their homes. Bed bug, cockroach, and rat infestations persist in Pinza's buildings. Pinza has failed to do regular maintenance and tenants report broken windows, broken doors to the outside, lack of ventilation, lack of extinguishers, and broken smoke detectors.

Pinza is targeting tenants that have been leaders in their buildings in demanding repairs, fair rents, and asking for rent control at previous Concord city council meetings. Pinza told a tenant in one of his buildings that he would not evict them as long as they didn't work with the "trouble-maker in apartment 4", referring to tenant leader Olga Chan. Tenants have a right to organize according to state law, and he is threatening tenants who get involved in organizing with eviction.

Tenant-leader Olga Chan says, "I have requested repairs by Pinza and none of them have been fixed. I have also gone to Concord city council multiple times to speak to get repairs made and to ask the city to act. The landlord has sent notices saying that he is coming to deal with the infestations and make repairs but has never shown up to make the repairs."

Pinza has a history of using threats and intimidation against tenants. The Pinza Group was recently fired at the beginning of May 2016 by the owners of 1127 Virginia Lane after the tenants had organized to ask for fair rents and repairs and Pinza refused to work with tenants. Even after being fired, Pinza threatened residents and attempted to criminally enter apartments without notice.

Tenants Together Organizer Eduardo Torres says, "Pinza is just one landlord driving the housing crisis. There aren't many housing options so he thinks he can just not make repairs and raise rents however much he wants. The city must act to protect its residents. Rent control and just cause are fair policies that help the whole community. Why should landlords make windfall profits while the rest of us suffer?"

Tenants Together is mounting a legal defense for the four tenants being evicted. In order to cover legal costs, a fundraising page has been launched at <http://bit.ly/concordfour> to raise \$4000. The eviction trial date has been set for Wednesday July 6th at 9am. There will be a community gathering before the trial.