

TENANTS TOGETHER

California's Statewide Organization for Renters' Rights

Winter 2012 - 2013

Changing the Way Tenants Are Treated in Sacramento

We will never forget listening to Assemblymember Isadore Hall (D – Los Angeles) ranting on the assembly floor about all the awful things tenants supposedly do to landlords. The rant was unsolicited and had nothing to do with the bill at hand; it had everything to do with the gloating gaggle of landlord lobbyists in the hallway. His message to them: landlords will get their money's worth out of this politician.

That was two years ago. Fortunately, the most recent legislative session was different for renters. There was no gloating among landlord lobbyists in Sacramento in 2012. Every statewide tenant rights bill that Tenants Together worked on in 2012 was signed into law, including AB 1953 (Ammiano), our sponsored bill to stop certain unfair evictions after ownership changes. We are also proud to have been an integral part of AB 2610 (Skinner), the Attorney General's bill to strengthen tenant protections after foreclosure. For more about these bills, see our legislative page inside.

2012 was predicted to be a difficult year for tenants in Sacramento, given the real estate industry money pouring into the November election. Nonetheless, TT and our allies navigated through the special interests and succeeded in

passing key tenant laws. We are particularly encouraged that the Governor signed these bills into law. Nobody knew whether the Governor would use his veto pen to strike down commonsense tenant protections, and the initial indications are positive for tenants.

Meanwhile, Democrats gained ground in Sacramento, securing, (at least for now), a 2/3 majority.

That said, many Democrats who are otherwise good on social and economic issues, do not vote well on tenant issues. Our job is to educate them, pressure them, and hold them accountable.

There was no gloating among landlord lobbyists in Sacramento in 2012. Every statewide tenant rights bill that Tenants Together worked on in 2012 was signed into law.



This year, we're launching a security deposit campaign. Too many tenants have their deposits withheld unfairly. If you are a renter who has had your deposit ripped off by a landlord, contact us to share your story. You'll

be hearing more about this important campaign in the upcoming months. Stay tuned!

15 Million Tenants in CA and counting, 1 Million Affected by Foreclosure Since 2009



California's population of renters is growing as many former homeowners become renters and a slow economic recovery means many more are priced out of the prospect of homeownership. Still, as we know too well, becoming a tenant does not mean you're immune to the affects of the foreclosure crisis. In 2011, we hit the 1 million mark of California tenants affected by foreclosure. We know from the tenants who call our Foreclosure Hotline everyday that the crisis is still going strong.

Tenants Together continues to work to protect tenants in foreclosure through education, organizing, and advocacy. We recommend the following measures to mitigate the impact of

foreclosure on communities:

- Expand outreach and education efforts to ensure tenants know their rights.
- Make the federal Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act permanent, expressly provide a private right of action for tenants whose rights are violated under the Act and strengthen similar state law protections.
- Pass local just cause for eviction laws to stop the eviction of tenants after foreclosure.
- Step up enforcement efforts to hold violators of tenant-protection laws accountable.

What's Inside

About Tenants Together.	p. 2
Program Updates.	p. 3
Members Taking Action.	p. 4 - 5
Local Highlights.	p. 6 - 7
Legislative/Court Watch.	p. 8
Snapshots Across the State.	p. 9
Membership Form.	p. 10

www.tenantstogether.org

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
Aimee Inglis Member Services & Volunteer Coordinator
Aileen Joy Office Manager/Administrative Assistant



*For identification purposes only

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
WatchThisProperty.com

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	Laurie Neighbors
Jose Lua-Valencia	Joyce Slaton
Vickie Martin	Erkki KochKetola
Bob Mason	Paul Hogarth
Alison Brennan	Zdenka Amadio
Judy Golden	Nili Aleksandrowicz
Keisha Adams	Samlecia Gaye
Tiffany Hickey	Lara Sanoica
Kevin Sciarani	Matt Dean
Lupe Arreola	Michael Olsen
Richard May	Brittany McCormick
Arlene Nieto	Asa Dodsworth
Daniel Steele	Kelli Shields
Elina Serrano	Mark Serrato
Gloria Zelman	Morgan McGinnis
Amanda Phillips	Sam Levign
Kelly Lynn McKenna	Ayriel Bland
Mary Ann Ellison	Andrea Bañas
Kelli Shields	María Escuin
Neefs Portillo	

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
Benchmark Institute
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
Tenderloin Housing Clinic

TENANTS TOGETHER PROGRAM UPDATES



**TENANT
FORECLOSURE
HOTLINE**
Call 888-495-8020



Survey Results from our Tenant Foreclosure Hotline

Since 2009, we have operated California's only hotline for tenants in foreclosure situations. Since launching, the hotline has counseled more than 7,500 tenants. The hotline provides a crucial service for tenants, while developing tenant leaders and activists and generating pressure on policy makers at all levels.

We recently conducted a random sample survey of past callers to our hotline. Over three hundred tenants participated in the survey, and of particular interest were the following findings:

- **55%** of respondents were evicted prior to 90 days or prior to the end of their lease.
- Defending UD cases: **9%** tenant won, **26%** landlord won, **60%** cases settled.
- **52%** felt harassed or misled after foreclosure.
- **62%** of tenants have been victims of security deposit theft (moved out and security deposit not returned).
- **82%** said we helped them learn & assert their rights.
- For **81%** we were the first renters rights group they had ever contacted.
- **95%** satisfaction with quality of information provided.

Our counselors are volunteers who have been specially trained to answer a variety of tenant rights questions for tenants dealing with foreclosure situations. Volunteer-counselors come from a variety of backgrounds, including students from local law schools (including Hastings, University of San Francisco, and Golden Gate), and Bay Area residents both new and old to the renters rights activist community. Without their support we could not do the work we do to protect tenants across the state.

Action Alert! Statewide Calls for Members!

Calling All Tenants!: updates on campaigns across the state. 3rd Weds of each month, 12-1pm.

Home Sweet Home: Q&A with our Legal Department 4th Tuesday of each month, 12-1pm.

Interested participating in either call?

Email Aimee Inglis, Member Services & Volunteer Coordinator, at aimee@tenantstogether.org.

Anti-Slumlord Campaign in Fresno

Tenants Together is empowering our members in Fresno to stand up to abusive landlords and uninhabitable housing conditions. A shocking number of Central Valley tenants live in deplorable housing conditions. Slumlords operate with impunity. In an area hard-hit by the economic downturn, tenants are suffering disproportionately with the one-two punch of a poor economy and bad landlords.

We are determined to change this dynamic and have been building a base of members in Fresno and beyond. We are committed to empowering renters in the Central Valley. Dozens of newly empowered tenants have been coming out to our community meetings to learn about their rights and get information from tenant attorneys and organizers. Our volunteer canvassers have been out in force at Saturday mobilizations, going door-to-door and educating tenants about their rights and how to assert them. We've already succeeded in forcing slumlords to make long-neglected repairs.

Join us at our monthly mobilizations! We'll train you and answer your tenant rights questions.

For more info, contact info@tenantstogether.org or call us at **1.888.495.8020**.

Did you know?

Starting in January of 2013 all apartment units must have CO₂ detectors installed. Tell your landlord!



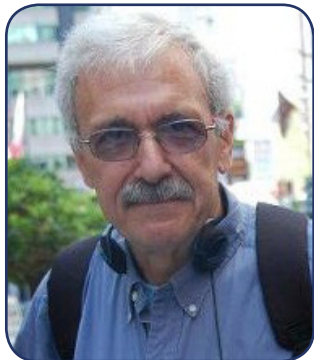
Need Legal Help?

In 2012, TT launched California's first ever **Tenant Lawyer Network**, a professional association for Tenant Lawyers. In order to join the network, lawyers

must pledge to only represent tenants, never landlord interests. You can find Tenant Lawyer Network members in your area by searching our Tenant Resource Directory at www.tenantstogether.org.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

If you've called our Tenant Foreclosure Hotline sometime over the past year, it's likely you've talked with Bob. We have several volunteer counselors serving the whole state, all of whom are specially trained to answer tenant rights questions. Since March of 2012 Bob has given a particularly significant amount of time helping renters understand their rights. We've received a lot of positive feedback on his willingness to go to bat for California's tenants and thought you all might enjoy getting to know a little more about him.



Bob is now retired but began his diverse professional career teaching Philosophy & Political Theory. He then spent many years in the field of Programming & Computer Science. His last stint holding bad actors accountable was working with UCSF on a Tobacco Control project to develop a database tracking misinformation spread by tobacco companies over the past several decades.

Bob's interest in housing justice issues was sparked fighting foreclosures in his neighborhood with Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) and Occupy Bernal. Bernal Heights is a neighborhood in San Francisco hit harder than many other SF neighborhoods by the foreclosure crisis. We met Bob through a housing forum organized by Occupy Bernal and ACCE, and in learning the impact of foreclosure on innocent renters and the clear way in which he could help, Bob joined us as a volunteer.

He considers volunteering with Tenants Together the second-favorite job he's had in his life (his top choice being making bagels at a small bagel shop in Berkeley) because of how directly he's able to help and the gratitude he receives from renters in regions where there are very few resources. Bob feels, "there's dignity in even just writing a letter to assert your rights." He enjoys helping callers clearly understand what action they can take on their own behalf, where the current law falls short, and how we must come together to push for change. There's lots of work to do, and he's happy to know exactly what to do to help. We would like to thank Bob for contributing over 500 hours of volunteer time thus far. With him and other counselors volunteering on our hotline, our work educating and empowering renters can continue to grow.

ORGANIZING VICTORY

Antioch Tenants Win Air Conditioning Battle

In August of this year, a group of tenants from Hudson Townhouse Manor (HTM) in Antioch contacted Tenants Together with complaints against a new property manager who had sent out notices prohibiting the use of air conditioners. The apartments did not come furnished with existing AC units, but a number of long-term tenants (some, who have lived in the complex as long as 20 years) had chosen to install them when they first moved in. Those tenants were informed by management that they would receive eviction notices if they did not immediately remove their existing AC units, citing potential Fire Code violations. Antioch is a city in east Contra Costa County where the temperature has been known to regularly reach triple digits. A significant number of these long-term tenants were also seniors and/or disabled, so the need for relief from the stifling heat was acute. This demand from the property manager was clearly unreasonable.

The HTM tenants had already responded by submitting a petition to property management, staging a march on City Hall, and arranging an inspection by the Mayor – all to no avail. The group needed more support to strategize next steps. That's when they reached out to Tenants Together. Building on the work that was already done, our organizer Guillermo Elenes and Volunteer, Richard May, worked to help the group continue to organize by developing existing leaders and discussing strategy and tactics at weekly meetings. Utilizing the State Fire Code and contractual obligations between the tenants and HTM, the tenants forced the property manager to reinstall previously existing AC units. In addition, tenants that did not have them in the first place were able to get AC units installed courtesy of property management.



We applaud the HTM tenants for reaching out to us for help and standing up for themselves. None of this would have been possible without the contributions of one of our tenant organizing volunteers, Richard May. His dedication and commitment to the HTM tenants was instrumental in this victory.

MEMBERS TAKING ACTION



Wanda in San Diego Fights Back

Wanda and her roommate signed a two-year lease for a condo in San Diego. There were problems from the very beginning: the landlord used part of the rental to store personal items and failed to address Wanda and her roommate's concerns about being able to access a 20-year-old water heater in case of an emergency. According to Wanda, "When trying to establish where things were in case of emergency, we realized that our water heater was in the back of the shed where [the landlord's] items were stored; also, the water heater was gas. Our landlord refused to give us a key to use only during an emergency."

Her landlord eventually moved the items that were packed hazardingly into storage with the old gas water heater, but the problems didn't end there. Wanda soon found out that her landlord had gone into default on the mortgage for the condo. For several months afterward, Wanda had to deal with real estate agents trying to sell the property at short-sale. Wanda wrote to Tenants Together that, "Our home was posted on the internet for several months. There were no statements noting that residents with a lease were in the home. Although I told the realtor that we preferred to not do showings at night or on the weekend, he still called at

those times and requested to show the property. It made me angry, but I kept my cool and remained polite."

The landlord failed to sell the home at short-sale, and eventually Wanda got the news that an auction date was set through the Notice of Trustee Sale, posted 20 days prior to the auction. That's when Wanda contacted Tenants Together's Tenant Foreclosure Hotline to learn her rights. The home was eventually sold at auction to an investor, Joseph Pham. Mr. Pham gave Wanda and her roommate 3 days notice to leave, but Wanda knew that they were covered by the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act and were entitled to stay in their home until the end of the lease.

Mr. Pham pushed back and eventually filed an Unlawful Detainer lawsuit against Wanda and her roommate. They decided to fight the eviction even though, "Some people want to know why we don't go ahead and move out. We love our home. We have made many friends. The main reason is there is no guarantee that if we move that this scenario won't just start again with another landlord." According to Wanda, she and her roommate won their case-armed with knowledge of their rights-thanks to Tenants Together. Additionally, Wanda has filed a grievance with Mr. Pham through the San Diego Association of Realtors.

Tenants Together commends Wanda's refusal to back down against mistreatment by her pre-foreclosure landlord and blatant violation of her rights from the post-foreclosure owner. It is difficult for tenants to win when self-representing in Unlawful Detainer cases, and we were thrilled to hear Wanda prevail in this case. We are proud to have her as an active member working to protect her rights and the rights of other California tenants.

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, Concord, Fresno, Merced, and other communities. These meet-ups are a great opportunity for tenants to meet each other, and learn about their rights, and to get involved. Merced is an example of just how powerful these meet-ups can be. 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 discussions 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.

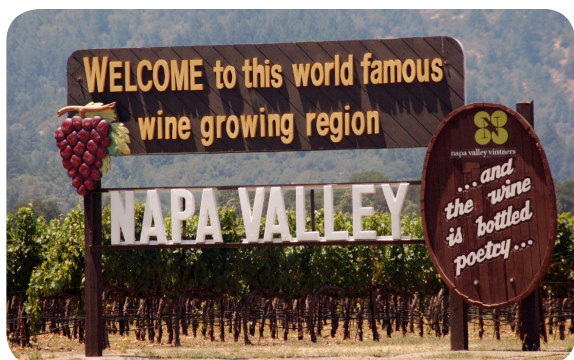


LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

ST. HELENA

Community Groups File Fair Housing Class Action Suit

Eleven former tenants of a substandard apartment building (closed by the city in November 2011) have joined with Fair Housing Napa Valley and Latinos Unidos del Valle de Napa y Solano to sue St. Helena. Their case cites that town's failure to require that rental units be maintained in habitable condition and its failure to develop affordable housing, as required under the Housing Element of the General Plan for the region.



St. Helena has abandoned several affordable housing proposals and has constructed just one (although ten more are in process) of the 76 units required under the General Plan. The suit also argues that the city is complicit in allowing substandard housing, as city inspectors knew about substandard conditions at the Pope Street property for years and did nothing to remedy the situation. California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) is representing Latinos Unidos in the lawsuit.

EL MONTE

Anti-Rent Control Ordinance Defeated

Voters in El Monte overturned an ordinance passed in 1990, which prohibited the City from passing any rent control legislation. Mobile home park residents there face rents of \$1,500 a month or more. The City plans to launch an investigation to determine if high rents at the city's mobile home parks are justified.

BAKERSFIELD

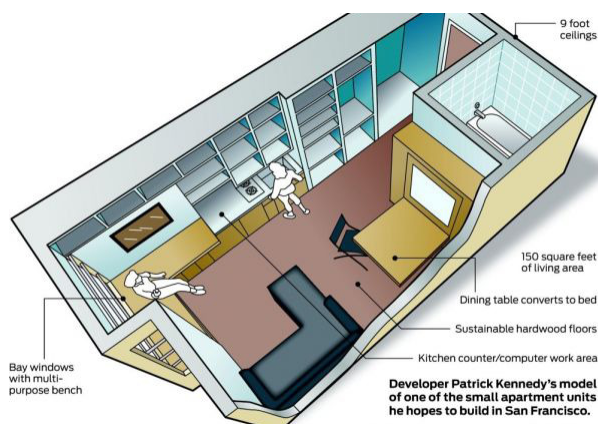
Tenants Win Landlord Sexual Harassment Case

The US Department of Justice has settled a sexual harassment and discrimination suit with Bakersfield landlord Rawland Leon Sorensen for some \$2 million, to be paid out to 25 complainants. The suit alleged that Sorensen had made lewd comments, exposed body parts not generally open to view in landlord-tenant relations, and denied housing to women who resisted his advances. Under the settlement, Sorensen is also required to hire a property manager and forbidden to have contact with tenants at his properties.

SAN FRANCISCO

Legal Apartment Size Shrinks

San Francisco's Board of Supervisors has passed legislation that will allow the initial construction of 375 "micro" apartments of 220 square feet (the equivalent of a medium-sized bedroom), including bathrooms and kitchens. Supporters of the micro-units argue that the units will rent for less than the \$2000 per month average for studio apartments in the City. Affordable housing advocates, however, have been critical of the proposal, noting that rents for the micro-units may be equal to rents for larger studio apartments. In addition, the micro-unit proposal does not address the much larger housing deficit for low- and moderate-income families. Families would be hard-pressed to function in units that small.



SALINAS

Tenants Face Retaliatory Evictions, Rent Increases

Tenants in a 15-unit Salinas apartment complex are fighting retaliatory evictions and rent increases after complaining about unsafe conditions at the property. The building owner seeks to increase rents from \$800-850 to \$950 a month. Tenants are protesting cockroach infestations, and one tenant is protesting that the landlord built a shed for paint and other toxins on the patio next to a room where two children sleep. The Center for Community Advocacy is working with the tenants to get the eviction notices rescinded and negotiate down the rent increases.

GLENDORA

Local Agencies Required to Provide Due Process to Tenants in Subsidized Housing

A ruling by California's Second District Court of Appeals protecting tenants in housing subsidized by local governments will stand after the California Supreme Court rejected a petition for review by the property management firm. The Court determined that Glendora's redevelopment agency must meet the same due process standards as the federal government in evicting tenants from subsidized units. The 70-year-old tenant, Sharon Green, was forced to live in a tent for a period of time after her eviction.

LOS ANGELES

L.A. Tenant Activists Defeat Online-only Rent Rules



Tenants at a 300-unit Southern California complex were told they would be required to make online rent payments and reached out to The Coalition for Economic Survival (CES) and Bet Tzedek Legal Services for help. Convinced that requiring online payment would discriminate against many low-income tenants who lack internet access, CES and the Western Center on Law and Poverty co-sponsored a bill prohibiting landlords from requiring that tenants pay their rent online, which was introduced by Senator Ted Lieu (D-Torrance), and signed into law by Governor Brown. Thanks to these organizing, legal, and legislative efforts, these tenants and future tenants will be protected.

EAST PALO ALTO

EPA Landlord Trying to Finish What Page Mill Started

Tenants at an East Palo Alto complex, which was foreclosed last year, are fighting the new landlord's service of eviction notices, many of which demand payment of improper rent increases. Equity Residential, one of the largest landlords in the country, is also evading the provisions of East Palo Alto's rent stabilization law, which requires that notices issued to tenants be filed with the rent board within five days of service on the tenants. Page Mill's owner claims that the notices are "advisory" and, therefore, don't have to be filed with the rent board. Some 750 notices were issued during a six-month period at the 1,800 unit complex.



*Great news
for all tenants!
David Endres
is out of
business!*

Notorious Eviction Lawyer Forfeits License to Practice

The campaign to expose eviction lawyer David Endres, Esq., and drive him from practice has reached a successful conclusion. Tenants Together, California's statewide

organization for renters' rights, celebrated the news that the State Bar has accepted Endres' resignation from practice, following his six-month suspension from practice. Endres has been notorious for pursuing eviction actions on behalf of major banks after foreclosure in violation of federal, state, and local law.

Endres has handled thousands of eviction cases on behalf of major financial institutions including U.S. Bank, HSBC, and Aurora Loan Services. On December 13, 2011, the State Bar suspended Endres from practice for six months. The suspension order from the State Bar notes that he filed over 1,000 cases between July 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009 alone. To accomplish these mass filings, Endres had non-attorney staff prepare verified pleadings and sign on his behalf. Endres knowingly submitted false verifications to the court.

At the time of the suspension, Tenants Together welcomed the news of disciplinary action but called for stronger sanctions. "David Endres should be disbarred, if not put in jail," commented TT Executive Director Dean Preston at the time the suspension was announced.

Tenants Together has long identified

"Endres' illegal eviction turned my life upside down for no good reason... I'm glad to hear he has finally been driven from practicing law and hurting other innocent victims."

-- Joelle Peebles, TT member

Endres as one of the worst violators of tenants' rights after foreclosure. In an August 2009 letter to Endres, Tenants Together wrote: "We believe that your conduct, particularly your refusal to promptly dismiss these cases once learning that tenants are at the property, violates your ethical obligations as an attorney in California. Please remember that tenants are innocent victims of these foreclosures. The least you and your bank clients could do is comply with the basic protections they are provided under federal, state and local law." Endres never responded.

Tenants Together calls on the Bar to take swift action against other unscrupulous eviction lawyers. These are the bottom-feeders of the legal profession who think nothing of violating the law and ruining people's lives all for a quick buck. We urge the State Bar to prosecute other unethical eviction lawyers like Endres.

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES & COURT WATCH

Subscribe
to e-alerts to
stay updated!

Tenants Together monitors tenant-related legislation in Sacramento, as well as the development of landlord-tenant case law. Below are key tenant-related issues in state government and the courts.

New Laws in Effect Starting Jan 1, 2013

AB 1953: Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco)

Sponsored by Tenants Together, this law prohibits evictions for rent accrued after a change of ownership when the owner failed to provide proper notice to tenants of the ownership change. The law 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 notice to pay or quit.

AB 2610: Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley)

Sponsored by the California Attorney General, this law extends the eviction notice period under state law from 60 to 90 days for tenants after foreclosure. Provides state law protection for leases after foreclosure. The law also plugs key loopholes that have led to premature displacement of renters.

SB 1055: Ted Lieu (D-Torrance)

Sponsored by the Coalition for Economic Survival and Western Center on Law & Poverty. This law prohibits a landlord from requiring online payment as the exclusive form of rent payment.

SB 1191: Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto)

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

AB 1925 Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco)

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

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

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

Review of Recent Court Cases

Annual inspection ordinance upheld

Griffith v. City of Santa Cruz, 207 Cal.App.4th 982 (2012)

The Court upheld Santa Cruz's 2010 ordinance requiring routine inspections of rental housing. The decision puts to rest various arguments used by opponents of rental housing inspection laws. The court also explicitly upheld the \$45 registration fee and the \$20 per unit charge imposed on landlords, holding that this was not a tax, but instead a fee to offset the costs of administering the program.

Huge Verdict Against Donald Sterling

Landlord and Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling was sued by tenants of an apartment building in West Hollywood. The jury returned a \$17.3 million verdict against Sterling in favor of a tenant. The jury awarded \$15 million in punitive damages and \$2.3 million in general damages. The case involved a 2009 fire caused by an electrical problem, and the plaintiff alleged that fire alarms and smoke detectors did not function properly. Landlords, not insurers, must pay for intentional uninhabitable conditions.

Insurance Can't Cover Settlement Funds

Axis Surplus Ins. Co. v. Reinoso, 208 Cal.App.4th 181 (2012)

Court upheld a judgment for an insurance company against a landlord for reimbursement of funds the insurer paid to settle a tenant's lawsuit against the landlord. The court held that landlords, not their insurers, are ultimately responsible to pay when they are successfully sued for intentionally permitting uninhabitable conditions.

Tenant Awarded Restitution Damages against U.S. Bank for Illegal Post-Foreclosure Eviction

U.S. Bank, N.A. v. Love, San Mateo Super. Ct. Civ. CLJ 201704A

A tenant was awarded \$112,986 plus attorneys' fees against a bank which locked her out and obtained an erroneous unlawful detainer judgment in violation of federal law protecting tenants in foreclosed properties. The tenant had a fixed-term lease with 10 months left when U.S. Bank took over and brought an eviction case that resulted in a lock-out. The tenant appealed and the appellate court reversed the eviction judgment. On remand, the Court (under CCP section 908) awarded restitution damages for the value of the rental, moving and interim housing expenses, lost property, the lost right to renew the lease, as well as attorneys' fees.

SNAPSHOTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

Members, volunteers, and advocates taking action!



Volunteers ready to defend families in Concord



Happy Hour for Bay Area volunteers, tenant activists, and advocates.



Fresno canvassers, November 2012



Volunteers take action via social media!



Families in Concord, Contra Costa County



Merced Chapter Members deliver referendum petition signatures.



California's
Statewide Organization
for Renters' Rights

995 Market Street, Suite 1202
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-495-8100

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
SAN FRANCISCO CA
PERMIT NO. 316



Take Action!
Donate!

Support California's renters' rights movement.
Join Tenants Together Today!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PHONE

CELL PHONE

EMAIL

Donor members support our work financially. Action Members pledge to work to advance tenants' rights at least twice a year, by writing letters, attending rallies or hearings, or making phone calls for TT campaigns. You could be both!

☐ I Will Donate \$ _____

☐ I have enclosed a check OR ☐ I will donate at www.tenantstogether.org

Members who contribute \$50 or more get a T-shirt. T-shirt size: _____

☐ I Pledge to Take Action

☐ Both: Donor & Action Member

Get a T-shirt!

Members who contribute
\$50 or more get a T-shirt !



Send form with check/money
order to:

Tenants Together
995 Market St., Ste 1202
San Francisco, CA 94103

Join online at:
www.tenantstogether.org

www.tenantstogether.org