



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STAY HOUSED L.A. FILES THREE TENANT ANTI-HARASSMENT LAWSUITS IN A PILOT PROGRAM WITH THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

*The effort was launched after an uptick in complaints received on harassment issues, which advocacy groups are concerned could be on the rise as landlords look for ways to remove tenants who owe rent due to COVID-19 financial hardships.*

The [Stay.Housed L.A.](#) program [announced today](#) the filing of three tenant anti-harassment lawsuits as part of a pilot project with the [Los Angeles County Department of Business and Consumer Affairs](#) to pursue egregious cases under the county's [anti-harassment protections](#), which include permanent safeguards under the county's rent stabilization ordinance as well as temporary provisions in its COVID-19 tenant protections. Both the permanent ordinance and the temporary resolution include the ability to assess fees and penalties to landlords who engage in harassing behavior against tenants. The full press conference can be viewed [here](#).

Advocacy groups that provide educational and legal support to renters across Los Angeles County have seen an uptick in complaints, which they fear could be on the rise as landlords look for ways to remove tenants who have been unable to pay rent due to economic fallout from the pandemic. Stay Housed L.A. complaints have almost doubled in the last few months compared to April 2021 when the program started tracking complaints received.

The filing of the three cases is meant to raise awareness about the [anti-harassment protections](#) that are in place and discourage landlords from illegally trying to remove tenants.

“Our Housing and Tenant Protections division and Stay Housed L.A. have been working diligently over this past year to ensure that tenants and property owners have access to the tools and resources needed to understand the protections that are in place,” said Rafael Carbajal, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs.

Details for the three cases are as follows:

- The [Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles](#) is representing a tenant in a lawsuit against the owner and property manager of a 12-unit building in Torrance, where she has lived for six years. Her family is one of the three tenants who remain after the owner allegedly started making unlawful eviction threats and refused to maintain habitability issues. The harassment claims include removal of gas service for their unit over several months, leaving the family without an ability to cook or use hot water. The claim also states that the harassment worsened during the pandemic, when the tenant lost her job as a teacher’s aide and was unable to make full rent payments. The landlord has begun to demolish parts of the building, which have pushed dust and rodents into her unit, where she lives with her two sons, one which suffers from asthma.
- In a case based in Inglewood, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles also filed a lawsuit against a landlord who is alleged to have left a tenant without heating since January 2019. The tenant is facing health issues, and the landlord recently also shut off access to hot water. The landlord filed a deficient unlawful detainer, or an eviction case, against the tenant after her request for rent relief under the county’s tenant eviction protections.
- The [Eviction Defense Network](#) is filing a case on behalf of an elderly couple in Florence-Graham, an unincorporated neighborhood in South L.A., and their three sons who allege complaints about lack of access to hot water and other habitability issues since January 2020. The complaint also alleges that the owner has taken steps to reduce amenities for the family, including removing their access to a garage, removing an outdoor seating area and forcing them to remove a garden. The landlord also changed the locks to the unit. The family says that they have been told that issues would only get worse if they do not vacate the unit, and the property manager has threatened the elderly parents using a pit bull.

“To prevent homelessness and keep renters safely in their homes, tenants need to understand their rights and have access to peer advocates and attorneys to best

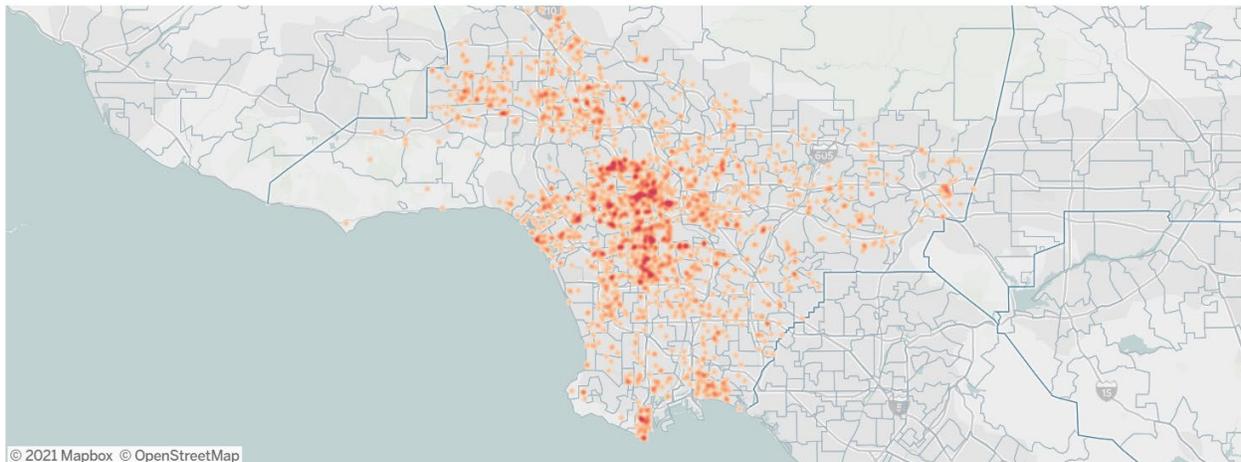
exercise those rights,” said Jenny Delwood, executive vice president of the Liberty Hill Foundation, one of the lead coordinating organizations of the Stay Housed L.A. program. “Regardless of their ability to pay, tenants have legal rights, including the right to live in their homes free from harassment by their landlords.”

Stay Housed L.A. is a partnership with the County of Los Angeles and a coalition of organizations that provide outreach, educational and legal support to tenants across the county.

“We are proud to partner with courageous tenants who are willing to use their cases to raise awareness about the challenges that renters are facing as they struggle to recover from the economic devastation caused by the pandemic,” said Paul Estuar, lead attorney for the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, one of the lead coordinating organizations for Stay Housed L.A.

Please also see a map below of the geographic location of the harassment complaints received by Stay Housed L.A., which can be compared to where [vulnerable communities are located](#).

Landlord Harassment Heat Map (March - September 2021 )  
Los Angeles County - Council Districts



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### **About Stay Housed L.A.**

Stay Housed L.A. is a partnership between Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles and local community and legal service providers. Together, we provide the residents of Los Angeles County, from Lancaster to Long Beach, with information and resources to keep people in their homes. Low-income tenants can sign up for free “know-your-rights” workshops and clinics as well as legal services at [www.stayhousedla.org](http://www.stayhousedla.org).