



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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Tenants and Advocates Celebrate Passing of Motion to Codify Right to Counsel for Eviction Defense in Los Angeles County

LOS ANGELES - The Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) joins the L.A. Renters Right to Counsel Coalition (LARTC) to commend today's vote by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to move forward with a motion that will guarantee tenants the right to an attorney in eviction proceedings. This landmark decision follows years of advocacy by LARTC to expand access to justice for thousands of families each year who risk losing their homes merely because they cannot afford legal representation.

Today's motion, introduced by Supervisors Holly J. Mitchell and Hilda L. Solis, directs County departments to develop an ordinance to implement a right to counsel ordinance in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County by the 2024-25 fiscal year. It also calls for the expansion of the Stay Housed LA program, which provides crucial eviction prevention assistance to low-income households, to achieve universal access to services in incorporated cities and unincorporated areas by 2030.

"No one, absolutely no one, should ever have to face eviction without the opportunity to be legally represented. Having a right to counsel will help level the playing field for tenants in court with landlords," said **Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, First District**. "This is about justice. This is about equity. This is about cementing Los Angeles County's guiding principle—serving as a safety net for our most vulnerable."

"Legal representation is often unaffordable and inaccessible for many working people, especially when hit with an eviction notice. Right to Counsel allows us to remove these barriers and helps thousands of residents maintain their housing," said **Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Second District**. "This is a necessary part of our strategy to end homelessness and sets us on a path to



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provide universal access to legal representation – a resource that every Angeleno deserves.”

“We will never make progress on homelessness unless we protect renters by providing the tools to keep them in the places they already call home,” said **Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, Third District**. “I will never stop fighting for renters who are increasingly priced out of their housing and victimized by an unequal playing field where landlords have every advantage. LA County is stepping up in unincorporated communities with a stronger Rent Stabilization and Tenant Protections Ordinance and Right to Counsel, and I hope all our cities consider how they too can be part of the solution.”

“The Board of Supervisors action to guarantee legal representation for tenants facing eviction proceedings and expand the Stay Housed LA program will help provide genuine access to justice for many vulnerable families living in Los Angeles County,” said **DCBA Director Rafael Carbajal**. “DCBA looks forward to the opportunity to increase our tenant protections through this groundbreaking effort, while continuing to promote initiatives and services that help foster a more equitable Los Angeles for property owners, renters, workers, and County residents.”

“The right to legal representation helps ensure that the protections that exist on paper for tenants actually translate into reality,” said **Barbara Schultz, Director of Housing Justice at Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles**. “Without it, we have seen tenants all too often evicted despite having ample legal defenses, simply because they did not understand technical aspects of court procedures or were unaware of their rights.”

Studies show that most landlords are represented by attorneys in eviction court, while most tenants are forced to navigate the process on their own. Right to counsel legislation in other cities, such as New York, has substantially improved outcomes for tenants, resulting in more families remaining housed and fewer falling into homelessness.

“Renters make up the majority of every part of Los Angeles County. To achieve housing justice, we must ensure that renters have the resources to assert their rights when facing the loss of their homes. We applaud the leadership of Supervisors Mitchell, Solis, and Horvath in protecting tenants and ensuring their rights are real,” said **Sasha Harnden**, Senior Public Policy Advocate at the Inner City Law Center and a member of the L.A. Right to Counsel Coalition.

“Housing insecurity and evictions disproportionately impact people of color, families with children, immigrants, and households without the resources to protect themselves in court,” said **Almas Sayeed, Vice President of Public Partnerships at the Liberty Hill Foundation**. “Ensuring that all tenants have access to know-your-rights information, resources and legal support against eviction is a matter of racial justice and equity for all of Los Angeles.”

“Today is a significant step forward towards realizing Right to Counsel in Los Angeles County and we look forward to ensuring Angelenos continue to stay housed in dignified

conditions,” said **Pablo Estupiñan, Campaign Director for Right to Counsel at SAJE (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy)**.

Since 1975, the County of Los Angeles Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) has been the local consumer protection agency serving County consumers, tenants, homeowners, immigrants, and workers. DCBA provides a wide range of services that aim to foster a fair and dynamic marketplace and enhance the economic wellbeing of our communities. This includes investigating consumer fraud complaints, enforcing the County’s minimum wage, tenant and worker protections, and providing access to justice programs. More information can be found at dcbalacounty.gov or by calling (800) 593-8222.

The Los Angeles Right to Counsel Coalition is made up of tenants, tenant organizing groups and advocates, homeless advocates, academics, and legal services organizations. The coalition formed in June 2018 to call for a Universal Renters’ Right to Counsel for tenants facing eviction, including legal representation, eviction prevention services, and emergency rental assistance.

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