Los Angeles eviction rates boom ahead of rent-control law

Three Los Angeles City council members have requested an emergency moratorium on evictions as tenants in nearly 200 apartments have received eviction notices ahead of the new rent-control law, the *Los Angeles Times* reports.

Governor Gavin Newsom on Oct. 8 signed The Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (AB 1482), which prohibits landlords from raising rents more than 5 percent, plus inflation, annually.

However, the law includes some important exemptions. Landlords of most apartments built after 2004, most single-family rentals and unoccupied rentals can continue raising rents more than 5 percent annually. For cities with pre-existing rent-control laws, AB 1482 will only apply to units not covered by local laws.

“For example, in the city of Los Angeles, the local rent control law only applies to buildings constructed before 1978,” read an explainer by *Curbed Los Angeles*. “Several hundred thousand newer units that opened in the nearly three decades from 1978 to 2005 will be covered under AB 1482.”

According to Councilman Mitch O’Farrell, landlords are taking advantage of the law’s provision for unoccupied rentals by evicting tenants ahead of the Jan. 1 deadline.

Current law allows landlords to evict renters without just cause, as long as a two-month notice is given. So, landlords are racing to issue evictions by Nov. 1.

What’s in it for you? How real estate organizations boost your business.

See why associations like AREAA can benefit you both professionally and personally READ MORE

In addition to the uptick in evictions, O'Farrell said residents are reporting exorbitant rent increases — another tactic to push renters out.

For example, one Los Angeles renter told the city council her landlord has raised the rent on her two-bedroom apartment twice since April 2019, increasing it from $800 to $2,400.

"We're asking for help because there's no way that we can pay these prices," she said.

In response to the complaints, O'Farrell alongside council members Curren Price and Nury Martinez has presented two proposals to protect renters.

O'Farrell and Price's measure would ban landlords from issuing no-fault evictions on rental properties covered under the law. Meanwhile, Councilwoman Nury Martinez's proposal would enforce the 5 percent cap before the Jan. 1 deadline.

We need to exert more local control on the universe of predatory landlords," O'Farrell said.

"Our goal is to protect renters from rent gouging and getting thrown out into the streets and we need to look for any and all options on how to do that now and in the future," Martinez added.

The evictions have been concentrated in low-income areas where renters are paying below-market-rate rents, with a report by *The Real Deal* noting that some evictions even seem to be retaliatory.

"Last week, more than 40 tenants in one apartment building in Westlake at 143 South Burlington Avenue received eviction notices," read *TRD*'s report. "Another building in Canoga Park, a 23-unit complex at 20954 Vanowen Street, also received a dozen eviction notices last week, according to a tenant who spoke to *The Real Deal* on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution from the owner."

"The evictions at 143 South Burlington are retaliatory, according to tenants and tenant advocates," *TRD* continued. "The complex was among three in the Westlake neighborhood at the epicenter of a tenant demonstration last year."

Housing rights activists are ringing the alarm, saying if the council's measures fail to pass both votes by the end of the week, there could be a sudden surge in homelessness.

"We think this is very, very urgent to prevent thousands of people literally becoming homeless in the next couple months," HIAR director Christian Moya told the *LA Times*.

Los Angeles is already struggling to aid its homeless population, which rose 16 percent year-over-

year in June to 36,000.

In 2016, Los Angeles voters passed Proposition HHH, a plan that uses $1.2 billion in general obligation bonds to help fund the construction of 10,000 supportive housing units. The results for Proposition HHH are abysmal, with only 117 units being completed in three years.

“It would be naive to ignore the connection between evictions and homelessness,” said Nisha Vyas, director of Public Counsel’s homelessness prevention law project, in an interview with Curbed ahead of the rent-control law’s passage.

Email Marian McPherson.

Editor’s Note: A previous version of this article mischaracterized how AB 1482 would impact cities with pre-existing rent control laws. We apologize for the mistake and have corrected it.

Source: click here