

From: [Dan Schwarz](#)
To: [Alison Foulis](#)
Subject: FW: Why Vulnerable Communities Need Just Cause Eviction Protections
Date: Friday, February 17, 2023 3:11:46 PM

From: Kyle Amsler <kyle.amsler@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2023 12:25 PM
To: Gabe Paulson <gpaulson@cityoflarkspur.org>
Cc: Dan Schwarz <dschwarz@cityoflarkspur.org>
Subject: Why Vulnerable Communities Need Just Cause Eviction Protections

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Dear Mayor Paulson,

My name is Kyle and I am a Marin renter and a Child Life Specialist by profession. Child Life Specialists are child development experts who help children and families navigate the process of illness, injury, disability, trauma, or hospitalization. I am an essential healthcare worker serving children receiving palliative care and hospice care throughout Marin and the larger Bay Area.

I wanted to write to you following the just cause eviction protections workshop where you discussed additional protections for school aged children. Since I work with children who are terminally ill and children with disabilities, I would also like to take this opportunity to urge you to protect terminally ill people as well as people with disabilities in a just cause evictions ordinance for Larkspur. I apologize for the length of this email, but urge you to read it in its entirety, as the data overwhelmingly points to the urgent need to protect vulnerable communities from displacement.

Housing insecurity is a public health crisis. Evictions and housing instability can lead to long-term negative impacts on physical and mental health for children and adults. Research shows that women, people of color, people living with disability and chronic illness, and families with children are at especially high risk for eviction. In the past several years, evidence of the [detrimental effects of eviction on health](#) has grown, with analyses demonstrating negative impacts on a variety of health metrics ranging from birth outcomes to mental health hospitalizations to all-cause mortality. Children raised in unstable housing are [more prone to](#) hospitalization than those with stable housing. [Mounting research](#) illustrates that even the *threat* of eviction can exact a physical and mental toll from tenants and their children.

[Forced moves \(for example, from eviction\) are linked to nutritional deficiency, low birthweight and other health challenges for children, and can be fatal for seniors and those with disability or chronic illness.](#) In contrast, housing stability is linked to better self-rated health, decreased depression and anxiety, and improves the conditions of

people with mental illness, chronic disease, and substance abuse problems.

Protecting school-aged children would decrease the number of moves children have to go through, and therefore lead to increased school attendance, promoting educational attainment. [Children who move frequently have more school absences, lower likelihood of finishing school, lower test scores, and educational delays](#). With every move, a student loses an estimated three to six months of education, resulting in delayed literacy and skills. Students who experience no moves are over 10 percent more likely to graduate high school than those who move three times during their childhood. A regression analysis of data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics found that residential mobility has a significant, negative relationship with high school completion — children who move between the ages of 4 and 15 have a lower likelihood of finishing high school, particularly when those moves take place during critical developmental periods between the ages of 4 and 7 and during adolescence.

For children who have a chronic or terminal disease or otherwise need ongoing medical treatment, residential moves can make it difficult to adhere to medication schedules and keep scheduled medical appointments. Moves can also take children and adults with illness and disability away from their medical provider community. I know firsthand from serving families of children with life-limiting illnesses the amount of stress changing medical providers can cause.

For adults and children with terminal illness (six months or less to live), or the children of a parent with a terminal illness, a move due to eviction is devastating. My mom was sick with breast cancer from the time I was seven years old, and she died on hospice with Larkspur's Hospice By the Bay when I was 16. I cannot fathom the amount of stress and trauma it would have inflicted on me and my family if we were evicted and had to move during the time she was on hospice care. Terminally ill children and adult renters, and their families, need these extra protections while they are in the final months of their lives. To not protect them would be cruel and immoral.

A [2018 study](#) of more than 22,000 low-income renter households in five cities found that, controlling for other factors, being behind in rent and multiple moves were associated with poor caregiver health, maternal depressive symptoms, and increased child lifetime hospitalizations. People having trouble paying rent are twice as likely to take sick days, and their children are at risk of developmental delays. Those worried about affording their housing are three times more likely to be in frequent mental distress compared to those with stable housing.

Hopefully these studies and reports show the need to strengthen eviction protections for school age children, people with disabilities, and the terminally ill in local jurisdictions. Then the question becomes, how can Larkspur make sure these protections don't backfire and harm the children and people we are trying to protect?

In my opinion, a lot of this comes down to education for tenants and landlords, which the City of Larkspur should seriously think about and plan for before implementing your new rent control and just cause ordinances. I have seen in Fairfax many

landlords and tenants who are simply not aware of the [state and federal laws](#) already protecting vulnerable communities from discrimination when seeking housing, and thinking they will discriminate or be discriminated against due to Fairfax's new just cause ordinance.

This is not the case. The [Fair Housing Act](#), a federal law, protects families with children ("familial status"), people with disabilities, and seniors from being discriminated against when looking for rental housing. Since it is illegal to discriminate against these groups when they are looking for rentals under federal and state law, it would be against the law for them to be discriminated against when looking for housing under stronger just cause eviction protections in Larkspur. For example, it would be illegal for landlords to not rent to families with children due to their fear of the school year protections in Larkspur's ordinance because of the state and federal law protecting families with children. The organization [Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California](#) does trainings for landlords and tenants around federal and state housing law and the Fair Housing Act, and I think it would be a great idea for the City of Larkspur to work with them and Legal Aid of Marin to put out materials and give trainings to landlords and tenants to help everyone understand state and federal law alongside the new ordinances. Tenants should also be made aware that both of these organizations can help them if they believe a landlord is violating the Fair Housing Act or state law while they are looking for rentals or renting. The City of Larkspur should post a webpage and FAQs about the new ordinances on their website as soon as possible after the ordinances are passed to prevent the spread of misinformation, and host workshops for tenants and landlords to educate about the new ordinances as well as existing state and federal laws.

Healthcare workers have always been essential in keeping our communities safe and healthy and advocating for public health. We know that stabilizing rents and preventing evictions will be key to creating long-term public health equity in Marin. That is why the National Union of Healthcare Workers ([NUHW](#)) (representing workers at Marin Health (formerly Marin General)) endorsed this campaign. If you are interested, many of the studies I cited are outlined in this report on how rent control and eviction protections build healthy communities: [OUR HOMES, OUR FUTURE](#)

Please pass a just cause eviction protections ordinance that includes the following (based on the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment ([ACCE](#)) Model Ordinance for rent control and just cause eviction protections):

- Relocation: If a renter or a member of their household is 62 years of age or older, 17 years of age or younger, disabled, or terminally-ill, then they are entitled to an additional \$3,000 relocation payment.
- Prohibits eviction for owner move in if a renter has resided on the property for more than three years and is 62 years or older, disabled, or terminally ill UNLESS the landlord's intended occupant is also 62 years or older, disabled, or terminally ill, or a caregiver needs to move in to the unit, and there is no other vacant unit on the property.

- Prohibits eviction for substantial repairs or owner move-in if the renter(s) have resided in the unit for more than a year and there are K-12 school-age children under the age of 18 or educators in the household if the notice of eviction expires during the school year.

Please let me know if you would ever want to have a call/Zoom to discuss any of this. I apologize for the very long email, but I hope it is helpful as you think this through. I urge you to pass strong universal rent control and just cause eviction protections in Larkspur.

Warmly,

Kyle

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