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To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: public comment for the upcoming city council meeting
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 3:43:33 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

I am writing, once again, in favor of stringent rent control and just cause eviction protections.

We need rent stabilization in Larkspur. Half of all Larkspur residents are renters and half of all renters--thousands--are rent-burdened. These are working families, seniors on fixed incomes, and young people trying to start their lives. Many have already been forced out of town, such as my friend, Lisa, who moved to Indiana last year.

We need a cap on annual rent increases that is tied to inflation as a fair and rational standard, not arbitrarily set to 4%. Most CA jurisdictions with rent control set their cap on annual rent increases relative to the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), because that provides a fair and objective standard, based on the real rising costs of landlords over time. We ask the council to adopt a rental cap of 60% of CPI or 5%, whichever is lower. 4% is an arbitrary cap and one that would still be far too high for most tenants if charged year after year, as wages do not get anywhere close to rising 4% per year.

We need real rent stabilization, not a rent dispute resolution model. The proposed rent dispute resolution model for administering rent regulations would put the entire burden of enforcement on the tenant. To expect tenants to appeal high rent increases imposed by their landlord, on whom they completely depend upon for their housing is totally unfair and unreasonable. Such an appeal simply triggers mandatory mediation and binding arbitration between the tenant and landlord, rather than a third-party review of the rent increase, which is also unreasonable and unfair. Landlords should have to receive permission from the city up front for any rent increase that exceeds the cap; the tenants, who are in an inherently dependent and vulnerable position relative to their landlords, should not be held responsible to appeal those rent increases.

We need a full set of robust protections for tenants displaced due to no-fault evictions, not simply slightly higher relocation payments. I, for one, have been scared of being evicted, due to my activism in this case--but so far, thankfully, that hasn't happened, and I hope it will not.

First of all, relocation payments need to cover the real costs of local relocation. This means they must cover first and last month's rent, security deposit, and moving expenses. We're asking for at least 3-4 month's fair market rent to cover these costs.

Perhaps the most basic additional protection for no-fault evictions is a right of return. This means that if a tenant is evicted having done nothing wrong, they are able to move back into their former unit, at their former rent (plus any lawful increases) if it ever again becomes available. If this provision is *not* included, then landlords can easily exploit no-fault evictions to circumvent rent control, by legally evicting their long-term tenants then jacking up rents on their new tenants.

We need to close Ellis Act Eviction loopholes. Under state law, Ellis Act Evictions can easily be abused to bypass rent control by evicting long-term tenants under the pretense of removing the unit from the market, then re-renting the unit to new tenants at much higher rents. The way to stop this abuse is to make the landlord liable to the tenant for triple damages, if they re-rent the unit within two

years of the original eviction and to ensure that re-rentals within five years cannot exceed the original rent, plus any lawful increases under rent stabilization. The original tenant should also have a right of return for five years.

Extra protections are needed for the most vulnerable tenants, including those who are elderly, disabled, and terminally ill, as well as teachers and students during the school year. Specifically, no-fault evictions due to owner move-ins should be severely restricted if not prohibited for these groups. It is not ethical for someone with a disability or terminal illness to be forced out of their home because their landlord decides they want, for instance, their brother to move in. As someone 61, with a disability, I am especially concerned about this matter, personally.

In closing, please consider all the points I have made above, regarding strong rent stabilization and just cause eviction protections.

Sincerely,

Vivian Taube