

From: [Sunny Noh](#)
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: April 17, 2023 City Council Agenda Item #10: "Strengthen Just Cause"
Date: Monday, April 17, 2023 3:03:28 PM

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Dear City Council and Staff:

My name is Sunny Noh and I am a resident of Southeast Petaluma. Though now a homeowner, up until just over a month ago, I was also a renter in Petaluma. I am also a supervising attorney at Legal Aid of Sonoma County.

My family, which includes my partner and my two young kids, thank you for your work on this ordinance. We are proud to be a part of a community that prioritizes diversity and inclusivity by protecting tenants who we know are more likely to be low income and/or people of color. See Generation Housing March 2023 Report, pp. 13, 23 (https://generationhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023_0322-Making-the-Rent-The-Human-Price-of-Housing-Cost-Burden.pdf).

However, I am disappointed that the proposed amendments remove and weaken important protections. As the mother of a soon to be TK student, it is beyond disheartening that the Council removed the protections for educators and school aged children, citing a lack of "strong support for the protections" during public outreach. See Staff Report, p. 8.

Legal Aid of Sonoma County did independent outreach at Petaluma public schools and heard **many** parents and school staff raise concerns about being able to stay in their homes due to high rent costs and lack of tenant protections. At the last city council meeting, Principal Mary Renolds bravely spoke on behalf of her school community at Miwok Elementary about the need for these protections. Additionally, at least one other principal and a school staffer were in attendance but, due to the overwhelming intimidation by the landlord lobby who occupied nearly all the seats in the room with bright green sticks claiming "Equitable Housing Provider", they did not feel comfortable raising their voices. Two members of the Board of Education also submitted letters in support of this protection.

Despite this, it is true that at the City's outreach events, it did not hear overwhelming support for these protections. In fact, what the council largely heard was deafening opposition from landlords. However, the City's failure to outreach directly to the Public School community was a misstep. The expectation that school staff should be comfortable raising their voices in such a hostile and public environment and that they should have the availability to participate in these forums, given their schedules, is irresponsible. Had the City reached out directly to schools, they would have heard strong support, as Legal Aid did, for these protections.

Petaluma City Schools publishes their salary scales for staff online (<https://www.petalumacityschools.org/Page/188>). For this current school year, entry level teachers start at \$58,300. That means that they earn about \$4,800 per month in gross income. According to Redfin, in March 2023, homes in Petaluma sold for a median price of \$795,000. See <https://www.redfin.com/city/14699/CA/Petaluma/housing-market>. This would amount to a monthly mortgage payment of \$5,620. Thus, it is far more likely that teachers and other school staff will be renters in Petaluma.

Petaluma asks teachers to come to our city and invest in our kids and our community. Yet, we will permit landlords to evict them for no fault of their own during the school year, impacting that teacher's own family and finances, the teacher's class, all 20 plus students, that school's staffing, and

the community at large.

We also will allow landlords to evict kids in school, for no fault of their family, during the school year, despite the fact that we know that California's Latinx, Black, Native American and Pacific Islander students disproportionately experience homelessness and that this has lasting impacts on that student and their family. See <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/california-students-of-color-disproportionately-experience-homelessness/>.

Last week, someone reached out to me about a family with three generations in one home, the youngest of which was in attendance at the school my son will soon go to. The family was renting a single-family home from a landlord who lives out of state and previously used this property illegally as an AirBnB. The family received notice that they needed to vacate or they would be evicted, despite paying over market rent and due to no fault of their own. And due to fear of an eviction proceeding, the family elected to leave not only the home, but Petaluma, instead of fight and risk an eviction record.

I urge this Council to protect this family, three generations of Petaluma residents, and all the families just like it, over this out of state landlord, who does not contribute to this community, but simply uses it for profit. This is now who we should be protecting.

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