

From: [David Marshall](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: April 2017, 2023 City Council Agenda Item #10: Strengthen Just Cause
Date: Monday, April 17, 2023 2:48:33 PM
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Dear Petaluma City Council,

My name is David Marshall and I am an attorney with Legal Aid of Sonoma County. I am writing to recount the story of a former client who was forced to relocate after her tenancy was terminated, allegedly on the grounds of removal from the rental market.

My client was a long-term Petaluma resident who at the time was unemployed due to a severe bout with COVID. She found herself completely overwhelmed, not only as a result of her illness and loss of employment, but also out of fear that her tenancy was being terminated under false pretenses, as it was by no means apparent that her landlord's stated grounds for termination were actually legitimate. Combined with a pattern of escalating harassment by her landlords, my client's stress, hopelessness, and anxiety were such that she would regularly call me in tears, not understanding why someone would do this to her or what the future would bring.

Both the temporary ordinance currently in effect and the proposed modifications upon which you are voting tonight will go a long way in ensuring that Petaluma tenants like my client who are subject to Ellis Act evictions can sleep a little bit more soundly. Knowing there is not just a mechanism to restore their tenancies in the event that they are subject to an illegitimate Ellis Act eviction, but also that the Petaluma ordinance establishes meaningful civil penalties for those who violate the law, will help instill a greater degree of faith that Petaluma tenants are being treated fairly and that their rights are taken seriously.

As an advocate I would, of course, press for the most expansive protections possible. At a bare minimum the protections in the proposed amendments should be adopted, and ideally additional protections would be included for seniors and those experiencing a disability.

I thank you for the good work you have done and, hopefully, will do, with the passage of this ordinance.

Kind regards,

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