

June 20, 2018

The Honorable David Chiu  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Housing & Community Development  
1020 N Street  
Room 162  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2187  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Chiu, Senator Jackson, and Members of the Committees:

In advance of your committees' June 21 joint hearing on a proposed state ballot initiative to expand local governments' authority to enact rent control on residential property, the undersigned housing organizations urge you to seek alternatives before this measure goes to the ballot.

A statement can be found on the following page, submitted on behalf of the following.

- Turner Center for Housing Innovation – University of California, Berkeley
- California Council for Affordable Housing
- California Housing Consortium
- SPUR
- TechEquity Collaborative



## **Housing leaders issue call for alternatives before rent control measure goes to ballot**

*June 20, 2018*

As Californians continue to struggle with rising housing costs, bold new approaches are needed to enhance affordability, protect existing tenants and accommodate future residents. Last year, our elected leaders began rising to this challenge, passing a much-needed package of new laws to alleviate the state's housing crisis. With one in three households still unable to afford their rents, there is much more to be done—and some groups, desperate to protect tenants from rising costs, want to ask voters to choose between two problematic options on November's ballot: fully repealing the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act—and removing limits on the expansion of rent control in California—or doing nothing.

We are concerned that neither choice will effectively resolve the housing challenges California renters face, and we believe there is still time to find a better solution.

Tenants' rights groups are rightfully frustrated with a status quo that does not do enough to protect renters, and it is clear that action *must* be taken to end California's epidemic of homelessness, displacement, and overcrowding. Unfortunately, the Affordable Housing Act headed toward the ballot this November would not materially improve the housing conditions of the vast majority of renters in the state. It could also create uncertainty in the development market that will discourage production of the affordable housing we desperately need to solve this crisis.

To that end, our organizations, working across the state on housing, land use and related issues, call on our legislative leaders to push for an alternative solution to California's rental housing crisis. We realize time is short and that the deadline for removing this ballot measure is only a little over a week away. But we hope the supporters and opponents of the Affordable Housing Act will use this time to redirect their efforts away from a contentious and costly fight at the ballot box—and work towards a solution in the Legislature that will protect all Californians suffering from rising housing costs.

To be clear, any alternative must include significant new protections for existing tenants above and beyond what is in place today. At the same time, these new policies should not impede the creation of affordable and market-rate housing. We believe these two goals are not mutually exclusive and that there are a range of policies that could achieve a balance, such as those recently put forth by the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley.

Our organizations stand willing and eager to participate in this dialogue to help find common ground—and to modify California’s rental housing policies to prevent abusive behavior and relieve cost burdens on renters, without reducing the availability and affordability of housing for others.

Whatever form a compromise takes, one thing is clear: Californians deserve better than the choices they may have to make on rent control in November.

We urge our elected leaders and the organizations on both sides of the ballot initiative to work towards a more productive resolution to this pressing issue.

Signed,

This statement was submitted on behalf of the following groups:

- Turner Center for Housing Innovation – University of California, Berkeley
- California Council for Affordable Housing
- California Housing Consortium
- SPUR
- TechEquity Collaborative

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