THE COST OF COSTA-HAWKINS

A REPORT BY THE SAN FRANCISCO ANTI-DISPLACEMENT COALITION

JULY 2018

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The San Francisco Anti-Displacement Coalition is a group of tenant organizations and allies who counsel, represent, organize and support tenants facing eviction, or who are seeking affordable housing in San Francisco. Together we organize against the soaring evictions and rent increases in our city, which have resulted in the displacement of thousands of San Franciscans.

The SFADC is comprised of organizations including: The Affordable Housing Alliance, Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, the Bill Sorro Housing Program (BiSHoP) & Veterans Equity Center, Causa Justa/Just Cause, the Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC) & Community Tenants Association, the Council of Community Housing Organizations (CCHO), Dolores Street Community Services & the Mission SRO Collaborative, the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco (HRCSF), the San Francisco Tenants Union, Senior & Disability Action, South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), and Tenants Together.
For the full list of coalition members, visit SFADC.org

THE COST OF COSTA-HAWKINS

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WHAT IS COSTA-HAWKINS?

The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act is a California state law, enacted in 1995, which limits local municipalities from passing certain kinds of rent control, and ensures that landlords can set any initial rent when a new tenancy is established.

Primarily, the law:

- Prohibits rent control on single-family homes and condos, even for rentals owned by large investors or corporate landlords.
- Prohibits rent control on "new" construction,* essentially capping the statewide rent control housing stock at 1995 levels or after the date the city passed rent control.
- Mandates vacancy decontrol, prohibiting laws that regulate an owner's ability to increase the rent as new tenants move into a unit. The legal right for a landlord to raise rents on vacant units has incentivized the eviction of long-term tenants in these units and continues to shrink the amount of genuinely affordable rental units.

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* Housing built after 1995 is exempted from rent control. In cities that already had rent control ordinances exempting housing built after a certain date, the earlier date is applied. In San Francisco, housing built after June 13, 1979 does not qualify for rent control.

The following pages examine the impacts that this legislation has had on San Francisco and other cities across the state. Renter households are a growing percentage of the population, and the rental industry is increasingly the domain of large investment firms and speculative financial markets. At the same time, over half of the nation's renters are cost burdened, paying an increasingly large portion of their income towards housing. We must ensure that our communities have all of the tools they need to maintain community stability and diversity in the face of unchecked speculation. Over two decades since the passage of Costa-Hawkins, it is clear that a repeal of this special-interest law is an important step towards addressing the ongoing housing crisis.

July 24, 1985 march, SF, with tenants from Old St. Committee, St. John's Lutheran Jobs Cooperative Housing Committee


THE RENTER'S VOICE

Old St. Mary's Housing Committee Newsletter

660 California Street at Grant • San Francisco, California 94108 • (415) 398-0724

September, 1986

Renters March On City Hall To Cap Rents

by Bernd Pick

On July 28, 1986, several hundred tenants marched from St Mary's Cathedral to City Hall to bring the plight of the tenants to their local government.

Shortly after the anti-tenant bill, AB 483, was halted in Sacramento, it appeared necessary for Old St Mary's Housing Committee and other tenants' rights groups to focus their attention on the Board of Supervisors, which is still one vote short of the needed two-thirds majority to override Mayor Feinstein's veto of the vacancy-control ordinance.

During the rally preceding the demonstration, several speakers described the need for toughened rent laws. The issue of the current campaign for vacancy control is to remove the financial incentive to evict tenants, legally or illegally.

As Clarissa Ward, President

Continued on page three

Renters and representatives from many human service organizations were visible to all but the unresponsive Supervisors Maher, Molinari and Renne, who still refuse to support real rent control in the city.

COSTA-HAWKINS IN CONTEXT

Costa-Hawkins was the real estate industry's response to powerful tenant organizing across California and in cities nationwide. The 1960's and 70's were times of widespread organizing around housing conditions, high rents and displacement. The civil rights, black power, student, and poor people's movements helped to politicize renters across the country. Tenants in Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, East St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Berkeley organized rent strikes to confront slum conditions and high rents in public and private housing. In San Francisco and other cities, tenants and activists mobilized against "urban renewal" projects that targeted low-income communities of color for displacement.[1] The strikes and other protests inspired a wave of tenant organizing in the following decades.[2 3 4]

The 1970s saw a period of massive inflation paired with stagnating wages and rising unemployment. Cost of living, including housing costs, skyrocketed. Berkeley students and low-income renters responded with an early rent control initiative.[5] While struck down by the courts, it set a course for successful rent control ordinances in years to come.

In June 1978, California's voters passed Proposition 13, a constitutional amendment that reduced property tax rates by almost 60 percent and raised the threshold for passing future revenue measures.[6] Backers of the initiative blamed high rents on owner property tax rates, promising that savings would be passed on to renters.[7] Instead, few saw their rents go down, and many tenants received rent increases shortly after Proposition 13 went into effect.

The resulting backlash galvanized tenants to organize for some relief: over 25 California municipalities passed some form of rent control by 1981.[8] In San Francisco, landlord Angelo Sangiacomo came to embody the false promises of Proposition 13. When he raised rent on 5,000 tenants, outrage spurred activists into action. The magnate was dubbed "the Father of Rent Control,"[9] and the city passed an early version of the ordinance in 1979. Tenants formed a statewide coalition to help each other pass local rent laws, including in East Palo Alto and West Hollywood, which incorporated as cities largely to pass rent control.

By the late 1970s, rent control laws had been passed in 170 municipalities across the country.[10] Unable to stop tenant momentum in cities with organized renters, the real estate industry looked for ways to override local initiatives. Real estate industry legislation was easier to pass at the state level, where renters were outnumbered by homeowners, and paid lobbyists had more power than at the municipal level. Most states passed laws banning or restricting local authority to pass rent control ordinances. When they failed to ban rent control in Sacramento, the industry attempted to weaken it: Costa-Hawkins was born.

Beginning in 1983, Assemblymember Jim Costa (D-Fresno) introduced the real estate industry bill every year. For over a decade, majority leader and Senate president pro tem Senator David Roberti worked to ensure the bill's failure. Roberti was ousted by term limits in 1995, and the bill passed the same year. The real estate lobby's effort to weaken local rent regulations was named for its two co-sponsors: Costa, who had moved to the Senate, and Assemblymember Phil Hawkins (R-Artesia), who sponsored the house bill.[11]

RENT CONTROL MATTERS

Passed in 1979 to address unchecked real estate speculation and dramatically rising rents, San Francisco's rent control ordinance has created the largest source of affordable housing in the city. There are over three times more rent-controlled units in San Francisco than all other affordable housing combined.[12] Rent stabilization provides some assurance to tenants that their rents will not rise more than a reasonable amount each year, set to the area consumer price index.[13] Without such protections, one's ability to stay housed may be linked to a volatile speculative market, where price and use value are disconnected.

When low and moderate-income renters are displaced from long-term rent-controlled housing, they must contend with a rental market priced for the top tier of the city's earners. As of May 2018, an average 2-bedroom apartment was on the market for $4.595/month.[14] The average renting family would have to work almost 95 hours a week—more than two full time jobs—to afford just two bedrooms.[*] A household working 2.5 minimum wage jobs (100 hours/week) would be left with just $132 a week for all other expenses after rent, including food, transportation, childcare, and healthcare.[**]

Rent control is a significant tool in stabilizing an economically and racially diverse community. It has been shown to increase the likelihood that tenants, especially seniors and long-term residents, can stay in their homes and the city.[15] For too many San Francisco residents, current market rents are impossibly high, and tenants must move out of their communities when they lose rent control housing. A 2015 study of Eviction Defense Collaborative clients[***] found that nearly four out of five households surveyed were unable to relocate within their neighborhoods.[16] A third of households left the city entirely, with half of those resettling in the larger Bay Area, and the other half settling across the state and country.[17] An additional 14 survey respondents were homeless.[18] This is likely an underrepresentation, as the 2017 Annual Homeless Count Survey found that 140 people—13 percent of respondents—were evicted immediately before becoming homeless.[19] Similar trends were reported in an analysis of displaced tenants in nearby San Mateo county.[20]

While publicly subsidized affordable housing can keep some evicted tenants in their communities, maintaining rent-controlled units is a more cost-effective and efficient means of preventing large-scale displacement. In cities where rent control is also able to regulate price increases between vacancies, these stabilizing impacts are even more robust. A study of New York City, where over half of the rental stock is under some form of rent stabilization, found that New York renters were over 2.5 times more likely to stay in their units from 1990-2000 than renters nationally.[21]

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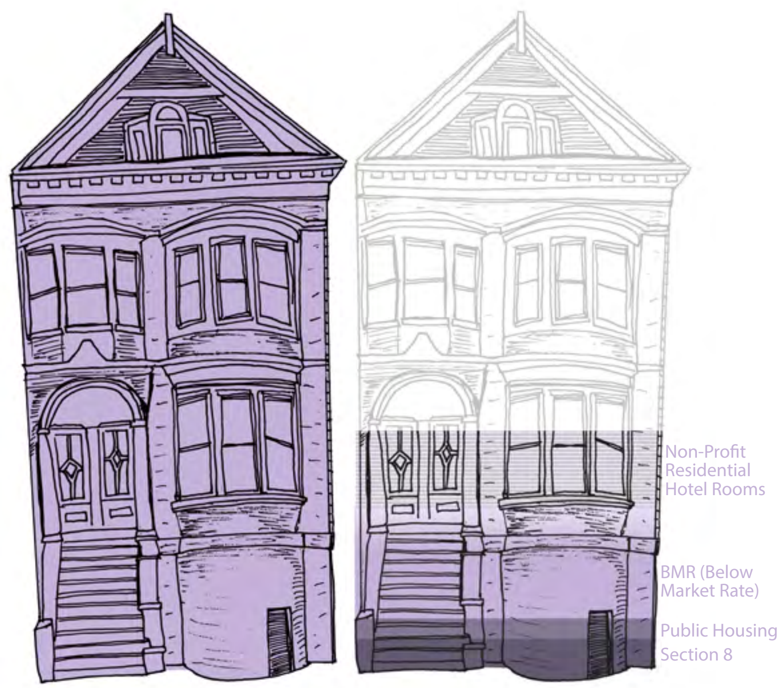
* The National Low-Income Housing Coalition estimates that the average San Francisco renter made $37.53/hour in 2017, and that a household would have to make $183,800/ year to afford $4,595/month in rent (NLIHC's annual Out of Reach report uses the standard measure of affordability: 30% of income towards housing costs).

** San Francisco minimum wage was $14/hr as of June 2018. A married couple with children, where one adult works 60 hours/ week and one works 40, would bring home around $60,000/ year after taxes. After current market rent, the family would be left with approximately $570/month, or $132/week. The Economic Policy Institutes' Family Budget Calculator estimates that food alone for a family of three costs $789/month.

*** The Eviction Defense Collaborative (EDC) and the Anti-Eviction Mapping project contacted a random sampling of clients who came to the EDC because they were facing an eviction in 2012. They surveyed 500 respondents. This data likely over-represents the percentage of tenants able to stay in their neighborhoods, as those who moved further may have been more challenging to reach.

THERE IS 3 TIMES MORE
RENT-CONTROLLED HOUSING THAN
ALL OTHER AFFORDABLE UNITS COMBINED

Rent control units are the largest potential source of affordable housing in San Francisco.



173,000 Rent-Controlled Housing Units

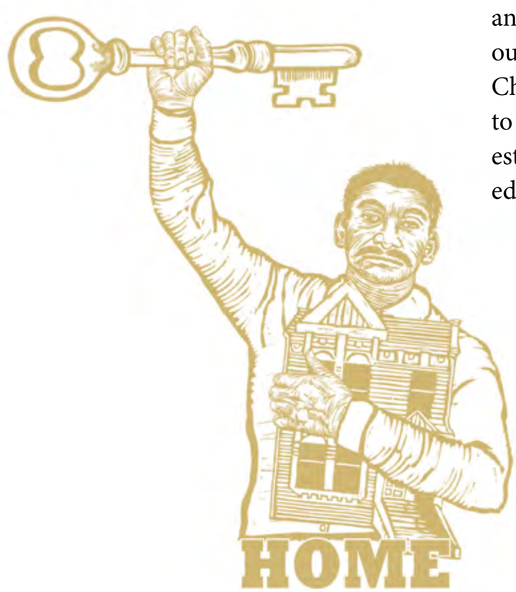
51,700 Affordable and Price-Restricted Housing Units

SOURCE: Analysis of Housing Inventory reports and other city data by Fernando Martí, for the Council of Community Housing Organizations, 2015.

THE COST OF DISPLACEMENT

"When residents are forced to relocate, it is not just the physical environment that changes but the social and cultural environment as well… When neighbors trust each other and are willing to help each other out, rates of violence, self-rated poor health, and mortality go down…At the community level, displacement can result in severe social, economic, and political fragmentation. Residents who are dispersed from other members of their community may have less political power as voting blocs are diluted and communities become less organized, inhibiting their ability to advocate for needed changes to ensure long-term health and wellbeing."

Causa Justa/Just Cause: "Development without Displacement (2014)[74]



Research shows that high rents, unstable housing, and displacement can have serious impacts on health and wellbeing. Cost-burdened and displaced renters are:

- More likely to be pushed into substandard housing conditions.
- Exposure to mold, pests, lead paint, and overcrowding increases the risk of respiratory illness, asthma, lead poisoning, and other chronic health problems.[22 23 24]
- Faced with impossible choices. High housing costs often leave little in the budget for basic necessities, and these rent burdens are associated with lack of access to healthcare, food insecurity, [25] and childhood nutritional deficiencies.[26]
- At an increased risk for anxiety and depression.[27] Housing instability has been linked to chronic stress, with long-term implications for health and life expectancy.[28]
- More likely to experience homelessness.[29]

When renters are displaced, they often resettle in communities far from their social networks, with fewer job opportunities, fewer health care facilities, and less access to public transportation. [30] Long commutes and higher transportation costs offset lower rents in outlying areas and leave less time for friends and family. Children are often forced to change schools, leading to significantly reduced educational outcomes.[31] One estimate suggests that students lose 3-6 months of education with every move to a new school.[32]

THE IMPACTS OF COSTA-HAWKINS

The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act was pushed by the real estate industry to limit the effectiveness of rent control. It has succeeded in that effort. Costa-Hawkins mandates vacancy decontrol, which allows rents to skyrocket between leases. This and other loopholes in rent control incentivize the evictions and harassment of long-term tenants, a practice incorporated into the business models of San Francisco's largest landlords.

The following pages highlight the impacts of Costa-Hawkins on tenants and their communities.

SHRINKING RENT CONTROL

THE EXEMPTION OF NEW CONSTRUCTION MEANS THAT RENT CONTROL UNITS ARE A SHRINKING PORTION OF OUR HOUSING STOCK

Costa-Hawkins ensures that each year we have fewer rent control units and fewer affordable units. Local municipalities do not have the authority to extend protections to housing built after initial rent control ordinances or Costa-Hawkins passed. As a result, cities are not empowered to respond as they choose to the shifting needs of their community, regardless of the local commitment to renter protections.

In San Francisco, "new" construction exempted from rent control refers to any housing built after 1979. Without a citywide registry, officials can only estimate the number of rent-controlled units in San Francisco, usually placed around 170,000 units. Nonetheless, we know that approximately 40,000 rental units have been built since 1980[33], and more than 15,000 existing rent-controlled units have been demolished or taken out of the rent control housing stock by Owner Move-Ins and Ellis Act evictions.[34]   As a result, rent control units declined from over 90 percent of the rental housing stock to under 70 percent in the two decades since Costa-Hawkins passed.

These figures do not consider units lost to illegal short-term rentals, and do not account for the loss of affordability when rent control units are turned over and brought to market prices under vacancy decontrol. Just under 22 percent[35] of new housing produced in the past decade was affordable to those making less than 140 percent of the Area Median Income, despite the fact that renter households in San Francisco average only 78 percent of the median.[36]

Since 1979, units covered by rent control shrank from 92% to 69% of the total rental stock in San Francisco.

DEBUNKING A MYTH: RENT CONTROL DOES *NOT* DISCOURAGE NEW CONSTRUCTION

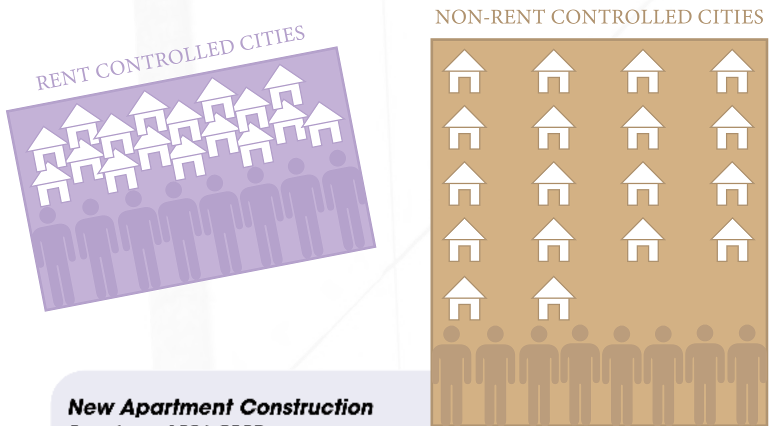
"Most studies have found that rent control has no effect on new construction... [In fact] proportionately more new apartments are built in cities with rent control." [39]

Referencing the possible repeal of Costa Hawkins, California Apartment Association spokesperson Debra Carlton warned, "rent control would put a halt on new construction." This commonly-repeated myth is not backed by facts. A 2006 study on new construction in the Bay Area found rent-controlled cities outpaced non-rent-controlled cities in building new apartments. From 1996 to 2005, approximately half of all multi-family units were built within rent control jurisdictions, even though they only contain 4.9% of the land mass in the region. These cities accounted for 34 percent of the population, but 48 percent of the new apartment construction.[37]

Studies of rent control consistently find that it does not impact new construction. In the decade following the passage of rent control, Berkeley's Planning & Development Department analyzed the regulations effects on new construction. They concluded that "the best available evidence shows that rent control had little or no effect on the construction of new housing." In fact, building permits reached their highest levels nine years *after* the passage of rent control.[38]

MORE THAN THEIR SHARE

RENT CONTROL CITIES BUILT 1.8 TIMES MORE APARTMENTS PER RESIDENT THAN NON-RENT CONTROL CITIES



New Apartment Construction
Bay Area 1996-2005

Jurisdiction	Land Area		Population		Multifamily Const.	
	Sq. Miles	Pct.of Bay Area Total	Population	Pct. of Bay Area Total	Total	Pct.of Bay Area Total
All	6815.5	100%	6,825,715	100%	104,540	100%
Rent Controlled Cities	332.4	4.9%	2,345,154	34.4%	50,627	48.4%
Non Rent Controlled Jurisdictions	6,483.1	95.1%	4,480,561	65.6%	53,913	51.6%

SOURCE: "Rent-Controlled Cities Lead in New Apartment Construction in Bay Area." Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board, *Berkeley Rental News* (2006).

COSTA-HAWKINS DRIVES UP RENTS

Costa-Hawkins places limitations on rent control that ensure that cities with tenant protections continue to have high rents. While many cities never included regulations on rent increases between tenancies (vacancy control) in their original rent ordinances, data from those who did illustrate the effectiveness of this provision. As a result of Costa-Hawkins, municipalities do not have the authority to add such a protection to their local laws.

San Francisco tenant advocates organized for vacancy control in the decade leading up to the Costa-Hawkins ban, three times passing moderate vacancy control measures only to have each either vetoed by the mayor or subjected to referendum. Following the mayoral veto of the 1980 vacancy control measure, the Board of Supervisors again passed a vacancy control measure in 1984. Following the veto of that measure, voters elected both a majority of Supervisors and a mayor explicitly committed to vacancy control. The Supervisors then passed a vacancy control measure for a third time in 1990. This version was finally signed into law but was then overturned by referendum via a million-dollar opposition campaign by real estate interests.

Today, advocates are unable to return to this fight as long as Costa-Hawkins remains in effect. After two real estate booms have shaken the city, rents are increasingly set to a speculative commodities market rather than to the actual costs of maintaining quality housing. Sales prices for rent control buildings frequently reflect an assumption that a large percentage of long-term rent control units can be flipped to market rate. The city's largest landlords build this presumption into their business plans, often relying on illegal methods to circumvent tenant protections and rent control, and pricing smaller "mom and pop" landlords out of the market. This strategy is examined in greater detail on pages 17-26 of this report.

San Francisco keeps little data on rentals, which limits our ability to quantify the number of rent-controlled units that have become unaffordable to the average renter with a change in leaseholder and resulting rent increase. A 2015 study of San Francisco's rapidly gentrifying Mission District estimated that 18-24 percent of rent-controlled units in the neighborhood experienced rent increases between 2010-2013 as a result of vacancy decontrol.[40]

TEACHER FACES A $47.000 ANNUAL RENT INCREASE ON HIS CHILDHOOD HOME

Morgan MacDonald grew up in his Mission District home but is currently facing a 675% rent increase that would force him out of the neighborhood he works in, lives in, and loves. His father moved into the apartment in 1974, and nearly 12 years later, Morgan was born. During his childhood, he split time between his mother and father, but this apartment was his only stable housing. In 2011, when Morgan finished college, his father moved out and he stayed in the unit. Morgan teaches science at a neighborhood middle school and lives with his girlfriend, who is a high school Spanish teacher.

For years, their landlord has been trying to evict them in order to raise the rent to the highest rates the current market will allow. They now face a Costa Hawkins rent increase from $580 to $4500 a month. Their case has appeared before a judge who ruled in their favor, but the landlord appealed the decision to the Rent Board. The Rent Board also ruled in their favor, but the landlord's family has vowed to take the case as high as it can go.

Morgan and his girlfriend remain in their apartment unsure of what happens next. The ongoing uncertainty, stress, and anxiety has affected their health as well as their professional and personal lives. Major decisions, including when to start a family of their own, have been put on hold.

I have my growth chart on the door of my bedroom. Losing my home means losing a bit of my past and my future, where I can compare my future child's growth to mine.

"This apartment has been my home for my whole life. Losing it means I lose the ability to stay in the city because there is no way we can afford it otherwise. I have my growth chart on the door of my bedroom so losing it means losing a bit of my past and my future where I can compare my future child's growth to mine.

"San Francisco was the only stable place I could come back to over the years and I've watched the city change as I've grown up. I've seen local shops get pushed out and people force to leave. Kids I forged relationships with growing up have all had to move away. I work at a school in the mission and almost no one who works there lives in the neighborhood without some sort of great deal or unless they have lived there for 20 years. I just want to live in the neighborhood I teach kids in."

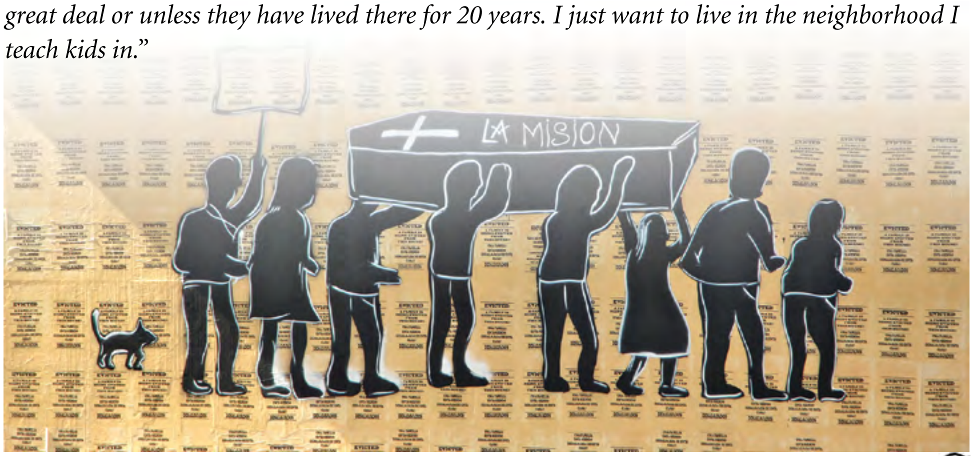


Photo credit: torbakhopper (scott richard), Mission District mural 2011

Two California cities offer an even clearer picture of how Costa Hawkins drives up rents. Prior to the passage of Costa-Hawkins, both Berkeley and Santa Monica included vacancy control as part of their municipal renter protections. Both cities have also maintained active rental registries, which collect information about rent prices and turnover in rent-controlled properties, helping us to understand the impact of state-mandated vacancy decontrol in 1999.

SANTA MONICA

Santa Monica voters passed rent control in 1979, seeking to limit landlord profits to a "fair return" in the wake of an increasing rental affordability crisis in the city. Since 2013, annual rent increases are linked to the increase in the Consumer Price Index, a measure meant to link rent increases to rising operating costs rather than to the speculative real estate market.

Before the implementation of Costa-Hawkins, rent increases in controlled units were based on 1978 rents, with an allowed annual percent increase authorized by the Rent Control Board. The initial (1978) "base rent" did not change even when the unit was vacated and re-rented, ensuring that the benefits of rent control extended to the renter community at large, and did not rely on individual renters staying. By 1999, full implementation of Costa-Hawkins mandated that initial rents must be negotiated with each new tenancy, allowing for the base rent to rise to market rate.

Today, average median rents in rent-controlled units are twice as high as they would be if vacancy control were still in effect. Market rents range from 2 to 3.75 times higher than those in units that have never been decontrolled (i.e. units where tenants have remained in place since 1999).[41] The difference is substantial: market-rate 2-bedroom apartments are affordable only to those making over $100,000 a year. The average area renter would have to work 2.2–2.7 full-time jobs to afford rent[*] on a modest 2-bedroom apartment.[42] Had vacancy control not been banned, a household making the area's median income could afford any size apartment in the city.[43]

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* A standard measure of affordability, used by HUD as well as many housing advocates, is that a household should spend no more than 30 percent of its income towards housing costs. An average market rent for a 2-bedroom in Santa Monica was $2950/month for a new lease or $2400 for all leases in 2016. The average renter wage that year in Los Angeles County was $18.79/hour. A household spending 30% of its income towards housing costs would have to work 88-109 hours per week to afford an apartment in this range.

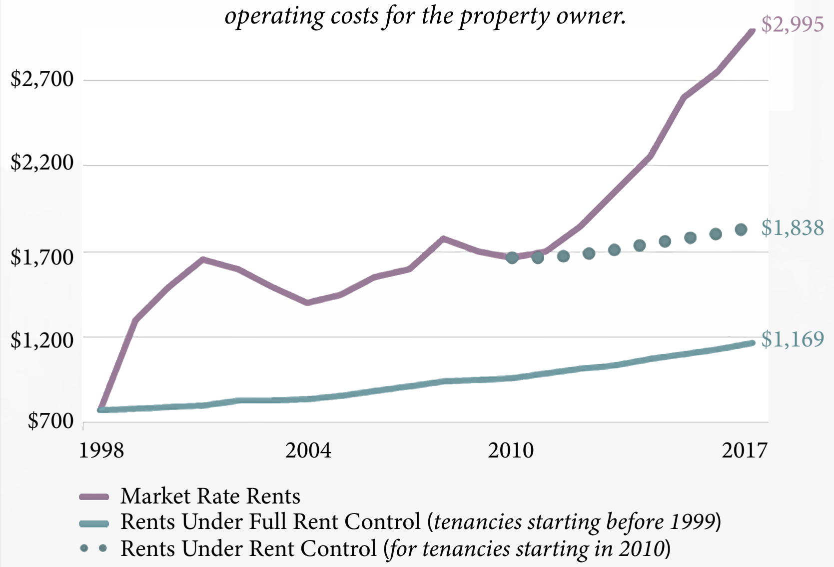
BERKELEY

In 1980, Berkeley residents voted in a rent control ordinance, seeking to maintain community diversity by protecting tenants from "unwarranted rent increases" or 65 percent of the annual increase in the consumer price index. Under Costa-Hawkins, this protection was eliminated for new leases. Since the full implementation of vacancy decontrol in 1999, 85 percent of rent stabilized units in the city have turned over at least once.[44] The result is a rent control ordinance that is less able to provide the community-level stability and diversity it was initially intended to offer.

Today, median rents are 57 percent higher than they would be if vacancy control had remained in place, costing the average household $7,700 annually.[45] A 2012 Berkeley Rent Board analysis found that, controlling for units that had not turned over since 1999, rents are 90 percent higher as a result of vacancy decontrol. Nonetheless, only 10 percent of this increased rental income is reinvested in building repairs and improvements or into the community via taxes paid to local government.[46] While 90 percent of increased profits under Costa-Hawkins go to investors, thousands of units report ongoing maintenance problems.[47] This number would likely be substantially higher without the habitability protections that accompany rent control on these units.

STABILIZED VS. MARKET RENTS

Because of vacancy decontrol, Berkeley tenants who began renting in 2017 are paying almost $14,000 more per year than someone who began renting in 2010, far outpacing the increased operating costs for the property owner.



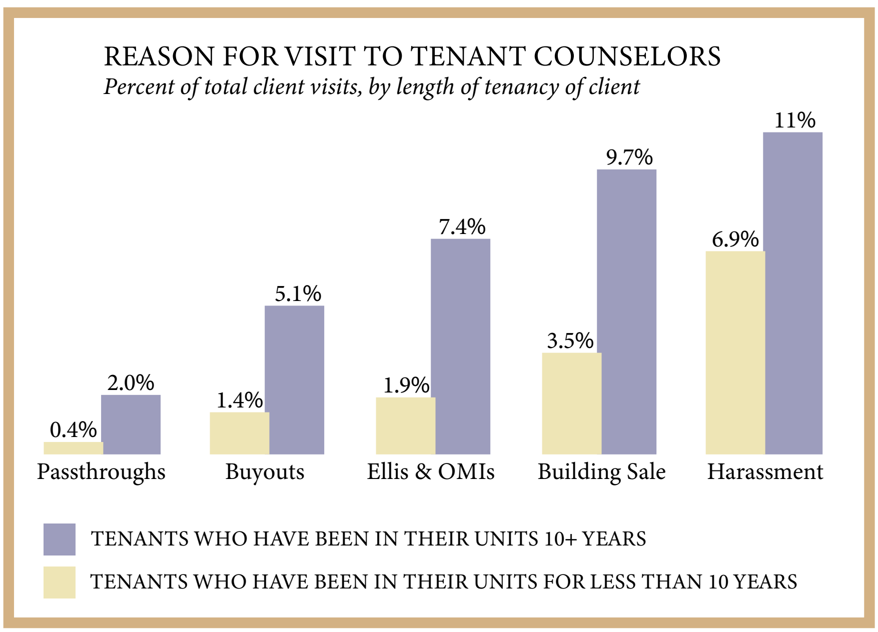
SOURCE: Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board

HARASSMENT

UNDER COSTA-HAWKINS, LANDLORDS HARASS TENANTS OUT OF RENT-CONTROLLED UNITS

Under Costa-Hawkins, long-term tenants can experience huge rent increases when the original lease-holding tenant moves out or dies, or if they live in a single-family home or in a home built after 1979. The Eviction Defense Collaborative, the principal organization in San Francisco helping low-income tenants respond to eviction lawsuits, averages one Costa-Hawkins rent increase case per week.[48] Of the cases where the outcome is known, 75 percent resulted in the tenant moving out. This sample represents just those tenants who choose to fight in court. Many more visit tenant rights clinics to learn their options, and may move out or accept large rent increases without going through an official court process.

Even where units are not subjected to Costa-Hawkins rent increases, the gap between market rents and what a tenant might pay under rent stabilization offers a profit motive for landlords to push long-term tenants out of their homes. An analysis of over 9,000 tenant counseling cases from two major tenant counseling organizations in San Francisco[49] found that long-term tenants were 3.8 times more likely to be targeted for no-fault evictions like owner move-ins and Ellis Act evictions. Tenants who had been in their units for 10 years or more were also 1.6 times more likely to report landlord harassment, 3.6 times more likely to be pressured to move via buyout offers, and 4.7 times more likely to be given a rent increase due to a capital improvement or utilities passthrough.



COSTA-HAWKINS RENT INCREASE USED TO RETALIATE AGAINST TENANT SEEKING REPAIRS

I want to stay in the city that I've raised my kids in.

Photo credit: Causa Justa/ Justa Cause

Guillermo Cano has lived in his Mission Street apartment since 2012, when he moved in with his brother-in-law and family. Less than a year later, Guillermo's brother-in-law returned to Mexico because of health problems. What was supposed to be a short visit for medical treatment, turned out to be a permanent stay in his native country. Guillermo took over the apartment, and the property management company accepted his tenancy and rent with no issues for the next 6 years. Then, in April of 2018, his unit was partially flooded due to faulty windows and a leaky roof, damaging many of his family's belongings. Although the property management company agreed to make repairs and reimburse him for the damaged property, they responded to Guillermo's request for reimbursement payments with a Costa Hawkins Rent Increase. Using the justification that the original tenant had moved out, they increased his base rent 170% from $1,622 to $2,750.

"The Costa Hawkins Rent Increase came in retaliation after I exercised my right to request for repairs. I cannot afford the lifestyle of the new wealthy newcomers in the city. I have to care for 5 kids, and I can't afford apartments in the city. I've lived in San Francisco, specifically in the Mission for 23 years. I want to stay in the city that I've raised my kids in."

SRO HOTEL RESIDENTS FIGHT BACK AGAINST DANGEROUS HARASSMENT

16 Virginia is a Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) residential hotel in San Francisco's Mission district. The current residents have lived in the building for many years, often doubled or tripled up in small rooms, at times housing entire families with small children. When new owners bought the building over a year ago, tenants were initially hopeful that ongoing habitability concerns would finally be addressed. For years, tenants have reported hazards such as cockroach, rat, and bedbug infestations, structural instabilities, flooding, and a broken fire escape on which a tenant died.

Joanna Belkin Reina: 16 Virginia resident & MSROC Member

But the new owners only created new problems as a result of stalled, shoddy construction. For months, there was only one working bathroom for the entire hotel. Drywall was left exposed with debris lingering in the air. The heat, hot water, and water would be turned off with no notice, and windows were removed, leaving a hole in the wall where everything from rain, construction debris, and people would come through. Some tenants were hospitalized with asthma attacks, pneumonia, and lung strain due to the worsening conditions.

The tenants soon discovered that the new building owner and the contractor have a history of using construction to harass tenants out of their rent-controlled rooms. Another hotel on 16th Street was completely vacated after several years of construction, paving the way for the speculator landlord to re-brand the units for wealthy new Mission residents.

Despite being afraid of involving authorities and afraid of retaliation from the manager and landlord, tenants at 16 Virginia have collectively taken steps to hold their landlord accountable. With support from Housing Rights Committee of SF and the Mission SRO Collaborative, they have brought their problems to the attention of the Department of Building Inspection and other city agencies. The city has since handed out approximately $70,000 in fines. The Mission SRO Collaborative and the tenants of 16 Virginia will continue to organize together to seek justice for the severe habitability violations and will monitor the hotel to prevent other dangerous and unethical attempts to illegally evict tenants and flip the units to the highest rate the market will allow.

Website for redeveloped Mission SRO, formerly the Yug, now Star City, advertising fully furnished rooms, cleaning services, and "lifestyle" events for residents.

Converted SROs like this one are part of the trend that threatens the tenants at 16 Virginia and other low-cost rooming houses.

PROFITING OFF HARASSMENT: CORPORATE LANDLORDS EXPLOIT RENT CONTROL LOOPHOLES

Two of San Francisco's largest landlords illustrate how the targeting of rent control tenants is built into the current housing market. They are not extreme examples or unique bad actors, but rather major forces shaping the housing landscape in San Francisco and across the region. Their speculative business models have led to the displacement of thousands of tenants. Today, Veritas Investments is San Francisco's largest landlord, with over 10,000 units. Many buildings in Veritas' portfolio were once owned by Skyline Realty[50], the city's largest landlord in the years leading up to the 2008 housing crash. Both real estate giants show a pattern of exploiting loopholes in rent control to increase their profit margins, often at the expense of long-term rent control tenants.

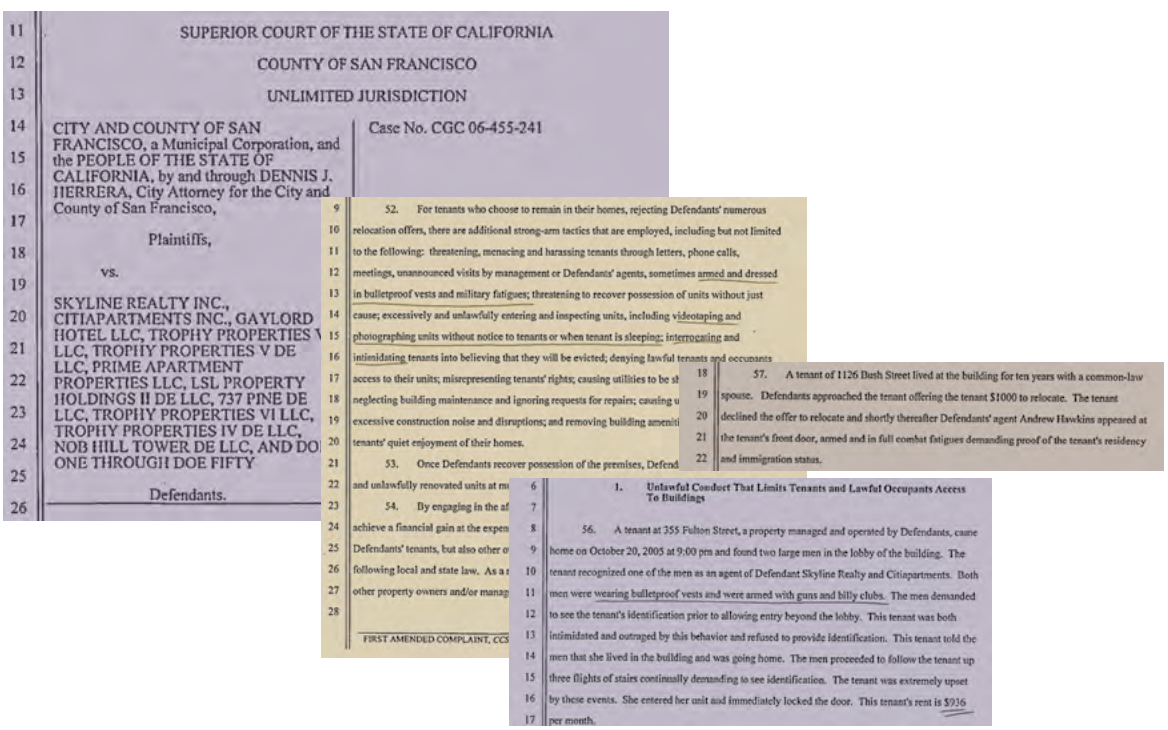
CITIAPARTMENTS

In the early 2000s, the Lembi family was the largest residential landlord in San Francisco, owning over 300 buildings run by their management company, CitiApartments.[51] The Lembis' Skyline Realty built a portfolio comprised of large apartment buildings filled with long-term rent control tenants. Buildings were purchased up to 16 times over asking price, often in cash, enticing owners who had not intended to sell their buildings, and driving up sales prices city-wide. To fund their buying spree, Skyline relied on high-interest subprime loans from Wall Street investors. They bought buildings with very little money down, often leveraging other buildings in their portfolio against their newer bids.[52]

Traditional investors saw that Skyline was buying buildings at higher prices than they were worth, given the income generated by rents from current tenants. Loan documents[53] verify that in order for Skyline to refinance at lower interest rates, they relied on their property management wing to quickly get as many low-paying tenants out as possible, replacing them with higher-paying tenants. By buying up large numbers of units in one neighborhood, CitiApartments was able to set market rents to suit their business interests.

In 2006, due to pressure from tenant advocates and increased media scrutiny, Skyline was sued by the San Francisco City Attorney's office.[54] The suit highlighted the aggressive tactics that CitiApartments used to force tenants out of their homes. From illegal eviction notices and buyout offers; to lockouts, utility shut offs, and unpermitted constructions, the Lembis' agents constantly harassed and intimidated tenants who refused to leave. Head of Relocation Andrew Hawkins was known to invite tenants into private meetings where men with guns pressured tenants to sign new leases or buyout agreements. He was also accused of marching through buildings with agents dressed as immigration authorities in an attempt to scare people out. Additionally, the Lembis oversaw the illegal conversion of residential units to short-term tourist and corporate rentals.

While the city litigated their case against the Lembis, renters in over 100 buildings sued the family's many companies for damages. At the same time, tenant advocates went door to door in new Skyline buildings, sharing know-your-rights information and strategies for resisting harassment and evictions. Tenant outreach successfully interrupted the tide of evictions, seriously damaging the Lembis' business model. [55] Between 2008 and 2011, Skyline lost nearly two-thirds of its buildings to foreclosure and bankruptcy.[56],[57] The City Attorney suit was settled in 2011, with up to $10 million in damages, injunctions against Citi's harassment strategies, and incentives to exit the landlord business.[58]



SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

UNLIMITED JURISDICTION

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, a Municipal Corporation, and the PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, by and through DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

SKYLINE REALTY INC., CITIAPARTMENTS INC., GAYLORD HOTEL LLC, TROPHY PROPERTIES V LLC, TROPHY PROPERTIES V DE LLC, PRIME APARTMENT PROPERTIES LLC, LSL PROPERTY HOLDINGS II DE LLC, 737 PINE DE LLC, TROPHY PROPERTIES VI LLC, TROPHY PROPERTIES IV DE LLC, NOB HILL TOWER DE LLC, AND DO ONE THROUGH DOE FIFTY

Defendants.

Case No. CGC 06-455-241

52. For tenants who choose to remain in their homes, rejecting Defendants' numerous relocation offers, there are additional strong-arm tactics that are employed, including but not limited to the following: threatening, menacing and harassing tenants through letters, phone calls, meetings, unannounced visits by management or Defendants' agents, sometimes armed and dressed in bulletproof vests and military fatigues; threatening to recover possession of units without just cause; excessively and unlawfully entering and inspecting units, including videotaping and photographing units without notice to tenants or when tenant is sleeping; interrogating and intimidating tenants into believing that they will be evicted; denying lawful tenants and occupants access to their units; misrepresenting tenants' rights; causing utilities to be sh neglecting building maintenance and ignoring requests for repairs; causing u excessive construction noise and disruptions; and removing building ameniti tenants' quiet enjoyment of their homes.

53. Once Defendants recover possession of the premises, Defend and unlawfully renovated units at m

54. By engaging in the af achieve a financial gain at the expen Defendants' tenants, but also other o following local and state law. As a r other property owners and/or manag

FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT, CCS

57. A tenant of 1126 Bush Street lived at the building for ten years with a common-law spouse. Defendants approached the tenant offering the tenant $1000 to relocate. The tenant declined the offer to relocate and shortly thereafter Defendants' agent Andrew Hawkins appeared at the tenant's front door, armed and in full combat fatigues demanding proof of the tenant's residency and immigration status.

1. Unlawful Conduct That Limits Tenants and Lawful Occupants Access To Buildings

56. A tenant at 355 Fulton Street, a property managed and operated by Defendants, came home on October 20, 2005 at 9:00 pm and found two large men in the lobby of the building. The tenant recognized one of the men as an agent of Defendant Skyline Realty and Citiapartments. Both men were wearing bulletproof vests and were armed with guns and billy clubs. The men demanded to see the tenant's identification prior to allowing entry beyond the lobby. This tenant was both intimidated and outraged by this behavior and refused to provide identification. This tenant told the men that she lived in the building and was going home. The men proceeded to follow the tenant up three flights of stairs continually demanding to see identification. The tenant was extremely upset by these events. She entered her unit and immediately locked the door. This tenant's rent is $936 per month.

VERITAS INVESTMENTS & GREENTREE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Veritas Investments, founded in 2007, has since replaced CitiApartments as San Francisco's largest private landlord.[59] Their inventory of over 250 multi-family, rent-controlled buildings includes the bulk of the former Skyline portfolio.[60] While Veritas appears to be avoiding CitiApartments' notorious use of guns and muscle to intimidate tenants, the pattern of systematically removing rent-controlled tenants remains in place.*

Veritas tenants, working with local renters' rights groups, have documented a strategy for systematically clearing out rent-controlled buildings of long-term, below-market tenants and bringing those units up to market rates. Through interviews with Veritas tenants and research into Rent Board petitions, complaints from the Departments of Building Inspection and Public Health, and Veritas' own loans and investments, tenant activists have found that:

1. Following in CitiApartments' footsteps, Veritas and their property manager Greentree tend to target long-term tenants with the lowest rents for buyout offers and evictions.

2. Buildings are regularly renovated to attract higher-paying tenants, at times to create short-term rentals that remove units from the long-term housing market altogether. As was the case under CitiApartments management, construction is drawn out to encourage low-paying tenants to leave, including constant utility outages, noise, potential exposure to lead and asbestos, and aggravation of existing structural issues leading to mold, water damage, cracks, and flooding.

3. Below-market tenants who refuse to leave are subjected to a series of rent increases. This includes imposing all past and current allowable rent increases, fees, and passthroughs not taken by previous owners. Operating and Maintenance Passthroughs include debt service on Veritas' mortgages, a practice that shifts the burden of inflated speculative real estate purchases onto tenants, no longer permitted in surrounding Bay Area cities. Capital Improvements Passthroughs shift the cost of fancy lobbies and other "gold-plating" for higher-income tenants onto the same long-term tenants targeted for removal. It also funds soft-story retrofits that bypass city approvals for converting garages, laundry rooms, and storage lockers into accessory dwelling units,[61] reducing the services formerly included in long-term tenants' rents.

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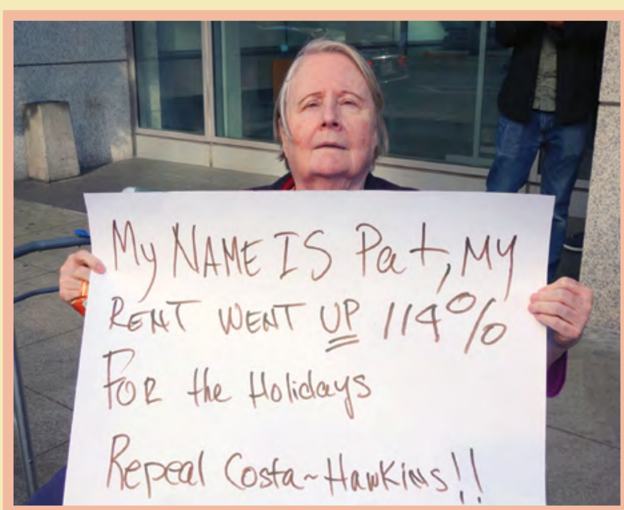
* Additionally, it appears that Veritas continues to work with some of the most egregious strongmen of the CitiApartments era. Andrew Hawkins, named in many lawsuits against CitiApartments, showed up in the news a few years ago in a campaign finance scandal as the director for a Veritas-linked property management service. See: Lagos, Marisa. "S.F. property firm, employee fined $40,000 for laundering money in 2011 mayor's race." San Francisco Chronicle, SFGate October 17, 2014.

SAN FRANCISCO'S LARGEST LANDLORD ISSUES HUGE RENT INCREASES AND HARRASSES LONG-TERM TENANTS

Barbara Sewell has been living in her apartment for decades. Barbara has multiple sclerosis and has relied on the support of her roommate and caregiver, who recently died. The caregiver was also the master tenant, and when he died, Veritas raised Barbara's rent from $1300 to $3000. Now, in addition to losing her main support system, Barbara may also lose her home and access to her doctors, as she cannot afford the 130% rent increase or another apartment in the city. The Costa-Hawkins law leaves co-tenants unprotected, even in rent controlled apartments. Landlords accept tenants like Barbara but refuse to add them to leases to exploit this loophole in rent control.



Pat, a disabled senior on a fixed income, is facing displacement from her apartment of 35 years. She connected with Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco when her corporate landlord, Veritas, began bundling passthrough charges as part of a multi-prong campaign to raise rent on long-term rent control tenants. Veritas hopes to force Pat out and replace her with higher-paying tenants as a means of increasing their already large profit margins.

VERITAS TENANT SURVEY

In an effort to better understand their experiences, Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco and the Veritas Tenant Committee has begun to survey long-term Veritas tenants. The survey is still in progress, but initial responses suggest a pattern of behavior towards long-term tenants consistent with a hostile landlord seeking to clear rent-controlled buildings of below-market tenants.

- Nearly half (47%) of participants have reported "receiving a 3-day notice that seemed unwarranted, baseless, or unfair."
- When presented with the statement, "Greentree provides me with a safe and healthy living environment," 90% of respondents said they "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" with that statement.
- To date, not one tenant surveyed has agreed – to any extent – with the statement, "Greentree welcomes my tenancy, and won't try to force me out in order to charge a new tenant more rent."
- Nearly 4 in 10 (37%) residents surveyed were required to temporarily vacate their units due to Greentree construction projects, and almost always (82%) without advance written notice.
- Residents in every building surveyed indicated that Veritas initiated substantial construction projects since purchasing their building, with just over half (53%) claiming that someone in their household has experienced negative health consequences and damage to their units, including: excessive noise; exposure to uncontained hazardous materials, such as lead, asbestos, and mold; disruption of sleep and work; regular and sustained interruptions of water, electric, and gas service, and elevators; asthma attacks; unexplained rashes and fatigue; and increased stress, anxiety, and fear.
- Tenants also report improper late fees after paying rent on time (57%), and invoices (67%) for charges that they could not understand.
- In the time since Veritas has become their landlord, these tenants universally claim (100%), to have experienced one, or more, of the following habitability issues: lead exposure; asbestos exposure; problems with mold; inadequate heat; ineffective weather proofing; uncollected garbage or waste; rats, vermin, or bedbugs; plumbing in poor order; gas facilities in poor order; lack of hot and cold running water; inadequate electrical plugs; or ill-maintained stairs, floors, or common areas.
- Of the 90% of tenants who said they complained to Veritas about one, or more, of these issues, not one indicated being satisfied that "Greentree responded to, and resolved, the issues to the best of their ability." (41% "Dissatisfied," and 59% "Very Dissatisfied").
- Roughly half (53%) of all those surveyed indicated that they had contacted the DBI (Department of Building Inspection) concerning habitability issues in their building.
- Just over half (53%) of those surveyed said that Greentree had asked them to sign agreements that would have surrendered at least some of their rights as tenants. Of these, the majority (69%) claimed the agreements contained language about their right to engage in legal action in the future.

PREDATORY EQUITY IN ACTION

One Veritas loan, covering 61 buildings, is worth $480 million. From Goldman Sachs, this loan is a joint venture between Veritas and Baupost Group, the Boston-based hedge fund that owns $911 million in Puerto Rican debt.[62] In 2016, Standard & Poor's analyzed the loan[63] and this particular portfolio of 1,726 units and found:

- According to the January 2016 rent roll, the average occupancy rate of the 61-building portfolio was 94.5%, with average rents 35% below market. Because of a lack of vacancy control in San Francisco, the portfolio had $23 million in potential rent if Veritas could turn over units and raise rents.
- Veritas put aside $19 million to fund renovation costs on units occupied at the time of purchase, assuming they would be able to remove tenants from the units.
- S & P goes on to write, "The portfolio has undergone extensive capital improvements since being acquired by the joint venture [between Veritas and Baupost] in 2011. Since acquiring the properties, the sponsor has spent approximately $32.9 million on capital improvements, of which $22.7 million was spent on unit renovations and $10.2 million on building and common area upgrades. As of January 2016, approximately 57.1% of the units in the portfolio had been renovated. The remaining 42.9% of units provide an opportunity for the sponsor to achieve rents closer to market levels once renovated."

Furthermore, an industry publication describes the impact of this model[64] on the neighborhoods in which these 61 properties exist:

> *"According to Reis Inc., monthly rents in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood, for instance, in 2015 had climbed by nearly 11 percent from a year earlier, to an average of $2,604/unit. They're now 34 percent greater than they were in 2011, when the Veritas/Baupost team bough the portfolio. The story's much the same in the other neighborhoods represented in the portfolio. In Pacific Heights, average effective rents, which take into account concessions, are up 27 percent over the past five years, and in Russian Hill, they're up 23 percent. Three years ago, meanwhile, the average rent at the portfolio's properties was $1,675/unit -- well below market levels."*

PRICED OUT OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

Nearly 8 percent of San Francisco rentals, 22 percent of Alameda county rentals, and 30 percent of rentals statewide are in single family homes.[65] These renters are excluded from any local rent control ordinances, making them particularly vulnerable to volatile markets and real estate speculators.

AFTER A DEVASTATING FIRE, FAMILY RECEIVES $1,500 RENT INCREASE WITH THEIR KEYS

In 2014, a fire roared through the Bayview apartment that Trinidad Sanchez and her family call home. Ms. Sanchez has lived with her daughter Cindy Salazar and her two grandchildren in the apartment since 2007 but were displaced for three years following the fire. During that time, her landlord was unresponsive, and she struggled to keep her family in the city. She turned to local community organization Causa Justa/Just Cause for help. Together, with the city's Department of Building Inspections, they worked to ensure that the apartment was repaired, and the Sanchez-Salazar family could return home. "We didn't know the apartment was ready until we saw it listed on rental websites" said Cindy Salazar. When they stood up for their right to return to their apartment, they were greeted with a $1,500 Costa Hawkins rent increase. "We are grateful. but we are not returning with peace of mind. We're worried about if we'll get that huge rent increase that will almost double our rent." The family did not know their unit was exempted from the rent ordinance until their landlord's lawyers announced the increase. "It is unjust," says Salazar, "we need at least a 3-year moratorium on this rent hike — for all the years we remained displaced."

Photo credit: Causa Justa/ Justa Cause

Owner Matt Sridhar is not the kind of mom-and-pop landlord that Costa Hawkins advocates used to justify the exemption of single-family homes from rent control. Sridhar, who lives in a multi-million-dollar mansion in Saratoga, is a notorious landlord who faces a string of complaints for poor maintenance by residents around the city, including one tenant who alleges that the fire in the Sanchez-Salazar family's building was due to his negligence. Sridhar served over 82 eviction notices in Oakland in just five years and attempted the 2015 mass eviction of 33 Filipino families in Alameda, prompting the intervention of the Alameda city council.

$2100 TO $7950: COSTA-HAWKINS RENT INCREASE PUSHES UNION LEADER OUT OF THE CITY.

Photo credit: Richard Bermack, Organized Labor Newspaper

When I moved in 20 years ago, the tree out front wasn't as big as its smallest branch is today.

Michael Kreamer was born & raised in San Francisco and has rented his single-family home in the Inner-Richmond since 1996. If he had moved in just months earlier, he would have been exempted from Costa-Hawkins' rent increases. Instead, he is being pushed out of his home of over 20 years, and out of the city entirely.

"When I moved in 20 years ago, I paid $2,100/month, and the tree out front wasn't as big as its smallest branch is today. My rent went up some when this place was covered by rent control, but it was reasonable." For years, his landlord relied on intimidation and harassment, including false eviction notices that scared away roommates, in an effort to get Michael out and to get higher-paying tenants in. When they realized his unit was exempted from rent control under Costa-Hawkins, they nearly tripled his rent to $7,950.

Michael has been a leader in the Sign Display & Allied Crafts Local Union 510 for over 20 years. He has worked, at times, 80-100 hours a week, saving to someday buy a house. Today, the combination of increased rent and legal fees have eaten through his savings.

RENT DOUBLES FOR FAMILY IN UN-MAINTAINED SINGLE-FAMILY HOME

Thirteen years ago, Rosa Maria Fuentes moved her family into a single-family home in San Francisco's Excelsior district. At the time, she paid $1,500/month in rent. The house, built in 1917, has been terribly maintained by the owner, and is not up to code. Rosa and her family have dealt with leaks, mold, rat and pest infestations, windows that do not keep the rain out, and even a collapsed roof. In response to their repair requests, the family regularly receives threatening and harassing letters from their landlord, but the building remains out of compliance with San Francisco housing codes. During this time, their landlord continues to raise the rent with every uptick in the market: it has doubled since 2005. Because Rosa lives in a single-family home, she is not protected by rent control, and today pays nearly $14,000/year more in rent than she would be paying if her home was not exempted from the local rent protections.

Photo credit: Causa Justa/ Justa Cause

"Our house is in very bad condition," says Rosa. "It is not fair that we are now facing the possibility of displacement because of the owner's selfishness, greed, and self-interest."

CORPORATE LANDLORDS DOMINATE THE SINGLE-FAMILY HOME RENTAL MARKET

While corporate landlords have long taken advantage of limitations on rent control in multi-unit rentals, the last decade has seen a transformation of the single-family home rental market. Costa-Hawkins exempts single-family homes from rent control under the assumption that the market is dominated by "mom and pop" landlords, but that is no longer the case. Wall Street is now landlord to more than 15,000 California families living in homes with no rent control and has begun to financialize this market.

The 2008 housing crash saw millions of homes foreclosed on nationwide. While low-income communities of color reeled from this massive community-wide loss of wealth and stability, Wall Street looked for new ways to capitalize on the crash. Private equity firms bought extremely discounted homes with financing from the same banks that helped to create the mortgage crisis.[66] By 2013, the finance industry began selling bonds backed by the future rents of these tenants, mirroring the infamous mortgage-backed securities preceding the foreclosure crisis.[67]

Today, single-family homes make up nearly 40 percent of the national rental housing stock.[68] In less than a decade of non-stop acquisition, at times spending over $150 million a week, Wall Street built the second largest residential real estate company in the world.[69] In August 2017, Blackstone (the world's largest private equity firm) and Colony Starwood merged under the name Invitation Homes, with a combined portfolio of 82,000 houses.[70] They are now the world's largest single-family landlords.

Rent-backed securities and the dominance of publicly-traded companies has turned single-family rentals into commodities. Wall Street landlords are more accountable to their shareholders than their tenants and must find ways to continually increase returns on their investments. Costa-Hawkins exempts single-family homes from rent control, and corporate landlords have quickly taken advantage of this loophole to raise rents. Surveys by Tenants Together[71] and Homes for All[72] found that tenants in Wall Street-owned single-family rentals have higher monthly housing costs than a typical renter in their area, at times over twice the area median, and well over the costs of owning the same home.[73]

Charitie Bolling and her mother Martha Simmons have lived in Bayview Hunters-Point for generations. For 12 years, they have paid rent on a home with an agreement that they could ultimately purchase the building. Now, their landlord wants to sell the building, and she wants to sell it empty in hopes of getting a higher asking price. Unable to evict the family without cause, the landlord is using a $1,900 Costa-Hawkins rent increase to get them out instead. Martha works three jobs, 16 hours a day, seven days a week, and still cannot keep up with the rent payments. "What's happening to me isn't right," says Martha. "I've done everything I could for 12 years to pay the rent, and this rent increase just seems like greed." Charitie and Martha have joined with ACCE to fight their displacement.

Millionaire Steve Kalmbach bought up housing throughout East Oakland after the foreclosure crisis. Now he is raising the rent on dozens of households in order to increase his windfall profits. The Sanchez family is one of these households: unprotected by rent control in their single-family homes, they saw their rent doubled. The family is now organizing with Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) to fight this impossible increase so that they can stay in Oakland and stay in their home.

CONCLUSIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS BY DEAN PRESTON AND AIMEE INGLIS, TENANTS TOGETHER

CONCLUSIONS

We know that rent control is the most cost-effective way to preserve affordable housing in many communities. We also know that vacancy control strengthens rent control and stabilizes diverse communities. The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act was a move by Big Real Estate to undermine rent control and prevent this proven, affordable tool from working as well as it could. Today, our communities face the ongoing economic and health impacts of this industry-backed law.

Local municipalities are unable to address the changing nature of the housing crisis in their communities because Costa-Hawkins ties the hands of advocates and lawmakers. Private equity firms are free to buy up swaths of existing housing to trade on Wall Street, but cities cannot regulate this consolidated industry. "New" construction, now decades old, is exempt from local protections, ensuring that rent control units continue to be a shrinking portion of our housing stock.

Across the state, rents continue to rise, and low-income communities and communities of color face ongoing displacement. We need to return control to cities and towns, where local governments should be able to implement policies to regulate speculation, stabilize rents, and keep people housed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A full repeal of The Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act, nothing less.

- This repeal will restore local control. Housing markets are highly localized, and jurisdictions should maintain the ability to create policies that address their specific housing issues and stabilize their communities.

- This includes reserving the right to regulate all rental housing, including single-family homes, condos, and units built after 1995. It also includes the freedom to implement vacancy control to reduce landlord incentives to displace existing tenants, and to prevent rents from spiking when a tenant moves or is forced out.

Support of local and regional rent control efforts.

- Rent control is the most cost-effective way to preserve affordable housing. Since housing crises have become regional issues that have a ripple effect, residents should consider collaborating on and supporting rent control measures in surrounding cities to help stabilize communities throughout their area.

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