



AGENDA REPORT

City Council

DATE:	May 2, 2023
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Councilmember Willis
Subject:	Support for SB567 (Durazo) Homelessness Prevention Act
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no financial impact to supporting the resolution.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	The City Council has adopted resolutions and ordinances to protect Richmond residents from unlawful evictions. Ordinance 15-22 N.S. (December 20, 2022) Ordinance 02-21 N.S. (March 23, 2021)
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	SB567 would amend the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 to remove eviction loopholes and lower rent caps.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	ADOPT a resolution in support of Senate Bill 567 (Durazo) Homelessness Prevention Act - Councilmember Melvin Willis (510-412-2050).

DISCUSSION:

The prolonged affordable housing crisis in Contra Costa County disproportionately impacts low income and working class households, senior citizens, people of color,

immigrants, and people with disabilities, and thereby increases homelessness, crime and harms neighborhood stability and cohesion.

Between 2017 and 2022, homelessness increased 30% across California, faster than anywhere in the U.S. In Richmond, the homeless encampments became visibly larger and increased in number.

SB 567 will enhance existing state law to better protect low-income California renters from unjust evictions and unreasonable rent increases. The Homelessness Prevention Act is an effort to address the state's rising homelessness crisis.

The City Council has adopted policies to strengthen tenant protection in Richmond. Urgency Ordinance 02-21 N.S. (March 23, 2021), enacted a temporary moratorium on certain evictions of residential tenants in Richmond impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through the state of the local emergency and 60 days thereafter. The City Council also adopted Ordinance 15-22 N.S. (December 20, 2022) to amend the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction and Homeowner Protection Ordinance to limit rent increases for regulated units to 3% or 60% of the Consumer Price Index, whichever is less. (MEASURE P).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey, 17.5% of families in Richmond have an annual income between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and 10.7% have an annual income between \$35,000 and \$49,999. Without the adoption of the Urgency Ordinance, an overwhelming number of Richmond residents would have been evicted during the pandemic.

The Census further states, during the 5-year period, 28% of Richmond renters held rents between \$1,000 to \$1,499 and 25.3% of Richmond renters had rents between \$1,500 to \$1,999.

The Richmond Rent Program serves and supports tenants by promoting healthy housing, and affordability for Richmond tenants through the regulating of those Landlord/Tenant matters that reasonably relate to rents and evictions, yet more protection is needed.

Low-income renter households across the state are paying more than half of their income on housing costs. Undoubtedly, this can cause housing anxiety which can lead to negative health and wellbeing outcomes. Tenants should be protected against the fear of an arbitrary eviction.

Without sufficient and long-term eviction protections, many tenants who receive eviction notices move out before an action is filed in court even without adequate replacement housing, rather than face future legal eviction that could impact their ability to find new housing.

Existing state legal protections in the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 have been insufficiently protective of tenants. Due to exemptions, some tenants are not covered by existing state tenant protections. Other tenants are covered but left vulnerable to “no-fault evictions” or rent increases that outpace inflation under the law. Residents have been unfairly evicted so that landlords can take advantage of the current local housing shortage and raise rents. Tenants are provided little information regarding their rights in the case of eviction and how to get help if they believe their rights have been violated.

The “removal from the rental market” and “substantial remodel” loopholes in the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 puts tenants at higher risks of eviction.

California residents; specifically, Richmond residents, and the City of Richmond support the amendment of the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 to remove eviction loopholes and lower rent caps. It is recommended that the Richmond City Council endorse Senate Bill 567 and direct staff to send a letter of support to Congressman Garamendi and Governor Gavin Newsom to express the city’s strong support to enact the bill into law.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Draft Resolution

Attachment 2 – Richmond City Facts Sheet

Attachment 3 – SB 567 (Durazo) Homelessness Prevention Act

Attachment 4 – SB 567 (Durazo) Key Statistics