



The Eviction Crisis: Causes & Policy Proposals

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USCGould

School of Law

Housing Law and Policy Clinic



LACAHSA






WHO WE ARE



Deepika Sharma
(She/Her)

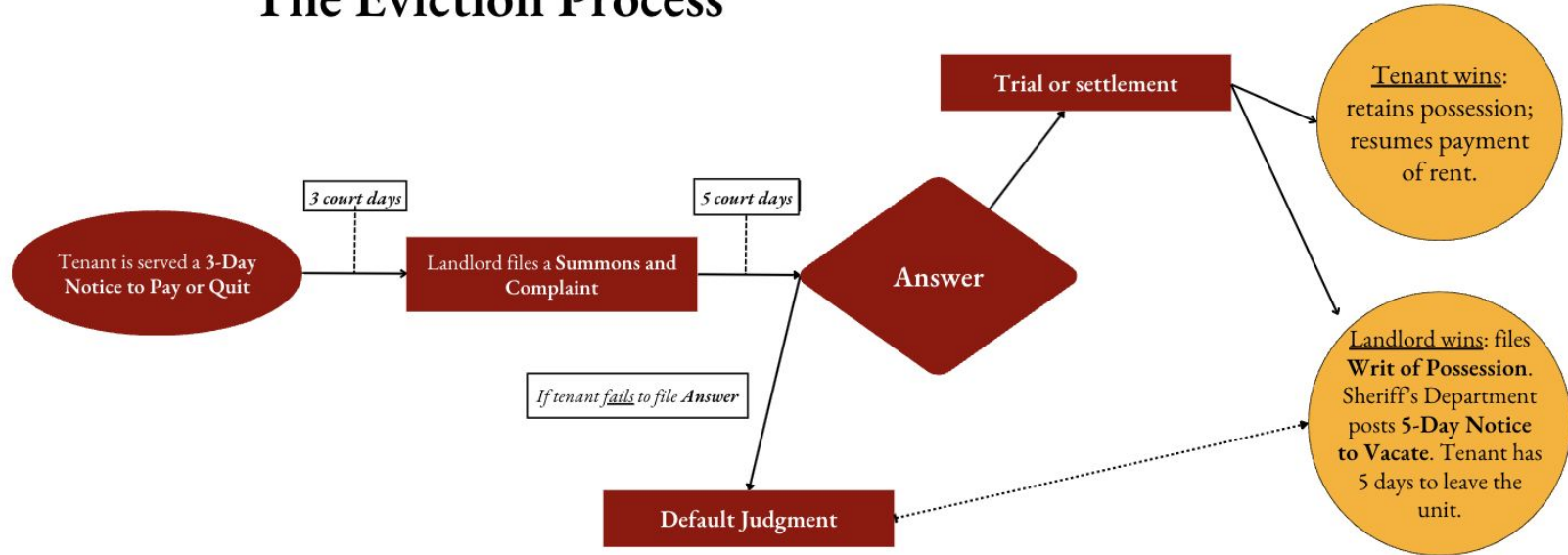
**Director of the USC Housing Law
and Policy Clinic**



Deepika Sharma joined the USC Gould School of Law after previously serving as director of housing policy for the Los Angeles Mayor's Office and for Councilmember Nithya Raman, where she crafted housing legislation including several amendments that strengthened protections to the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance and oversaw the city's housing security initiatives.

Prior to her policy roles, she served as the supervising attorney at the Eviction Defense Network where she litigated over a dozen bench and jury trials and then as a senior attorney at Public Counsel, where she practiced for more than six years and led the affirmative housing litigation unit. Notably, in that role, Sharma led a multi-building Fair Housing Act case, *Martinez v. Optimus*, challenging the discriminatory harassment and predation against tenants rampant in gentrifying neighborhoods. The case gained national media attention and included a novel settlement term that set aside housing for voucher holders.

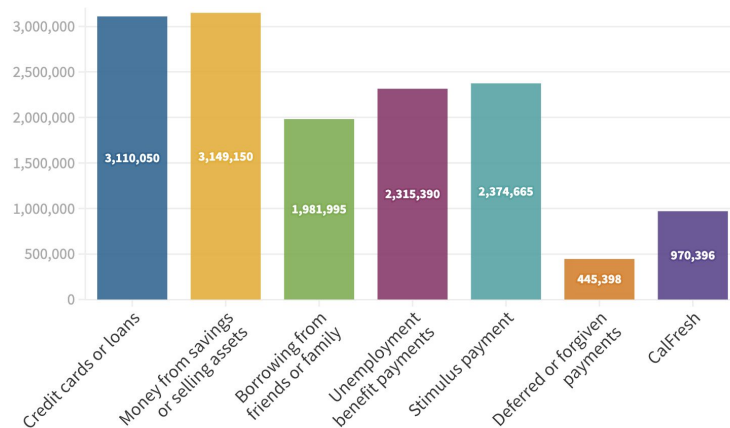
The Eviction Process



Who Is Being Evicted?

- **768,000 households are behind on rent in CA**, totaling over \$2 billion¹
 - Overwhelmingly impacts low-income households, people of color, and households with children²
 - Average rental assistance needed in Los Angeles is ~\$2500³
- Between 1/27/23 and 7/31/23: **96%** of eviction notices in LA City were served for nonpayment of rent⁴
 - Median amount owed: **\$2,678.84**
 - Average fair market rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the LA area: **\$1,747** (HUD)⁵

California renters increasingly look to loans, borrowing as government benefits expire



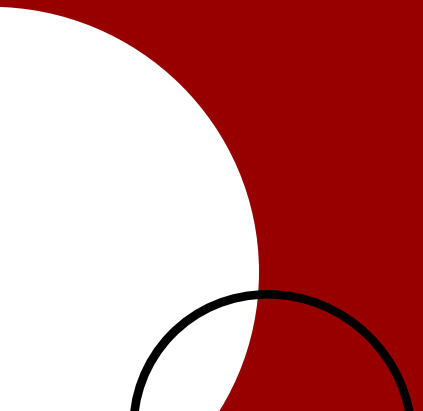
Source: U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, December 2020

CAL MATTERS

A Flourish chart

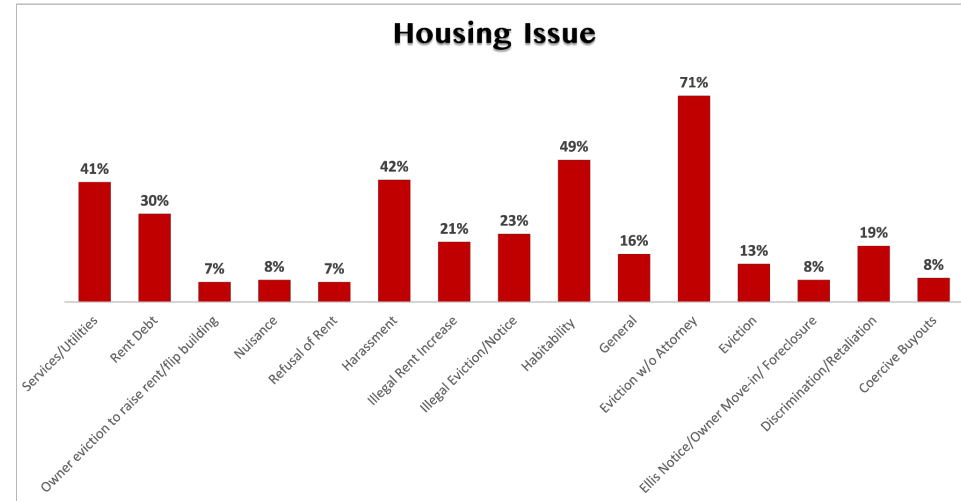


Policy Proposal #1: Rental Assistance for Future/Prospective Rent

- The eviction timeline is very quick once a tenant is served a 3-day notice⁶
 - One study found that keeping one person housed in LA saves taxpayers over \$40,000 per year on public service costs alone⁷
 - One study found that filing an eviction case in the State of California costs approximately \$4,000 which doesn't include lost rent⁸
 - This cost is likely higher than for Los Angeles County
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USC Gould Housing Law & Policy Clinic

- We serve tenants in LA City, Unincorporated LA County and other Cities in LA County including Compton, Lynwood, Downey, Bellflower, Gardena, Arcadia etc.
- 44% of the tenants served were **families with children & 41% were monolingual Spanish speakers**
- **57% of the tenants we served experienced harassment and/or retaliation**
 - Many reported a reduction in services, refusal of rent, and illegal eviction



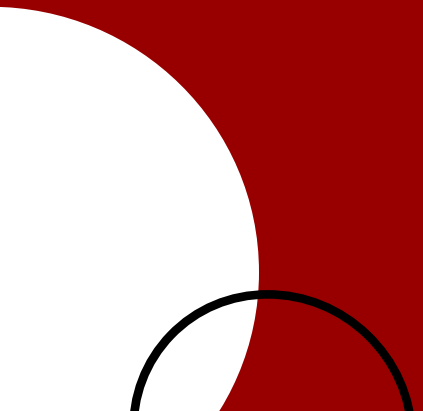


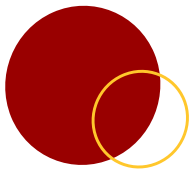
HARASSMENT & “INFORMAL” EVICTIONS

- For every formal eviction filed for a particular corporate landlord in LA, there were six informal evictions that occurred off the books.⁹
- The prevalence of informal evictions is also supported by a study by USC’s Price School of Social Policy, which tracked 911 calls to the police by tenants complaining about unlawful landlord practices such as utility shut-offs, window and door removal, illegal changing of locks, removal of parking, and other instances of harassment, abuse, or informal eviction.¹⁰



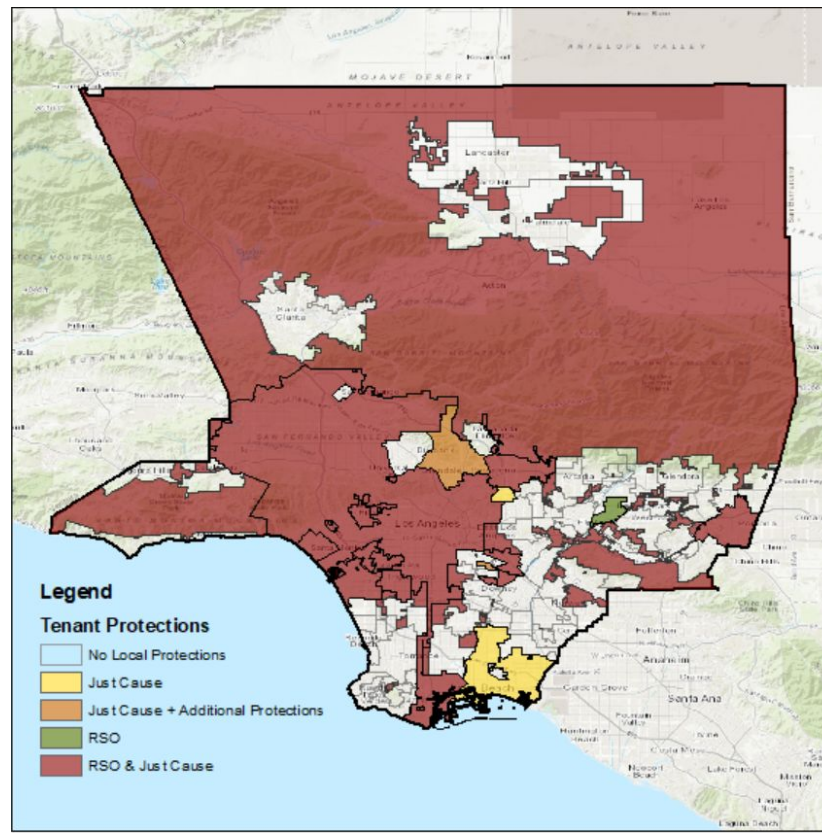
Policy Proposal #2: Anti-Harassment Enforcement Mechanisms

- Local government programs that discourage tenant harassment
 - Local ordinances aimed at combating tenant harassment
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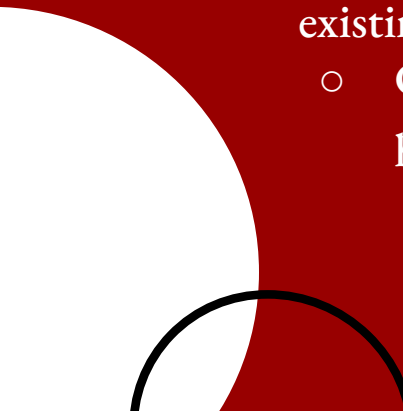
Protections in LA County


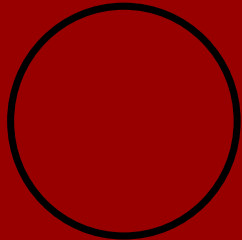
City	Local Tenant Protections
Bell Gardens	RSO & Just Cause
Beverly Hills	RSO & Just Cause
Commerce	RSO & Just Cause
Cudahy	RSO & Just Cause
Culver City	RSO & Just Cause
Inglewood	RSO & Just Cause
Los Angeles	RSO & Just Cause
Pomona	RSO & Just Cause
Pasadena	RSO & Just Cause
Santa Monica	RSO & Just Cause
West Hollywood	RSO & Just Cause
Unincorporated County	RSO & Just Cause
Baldwin Park	RSO
Glendale	Just Cause & Other
Maywood	Just Cause & Other
Long Beach	Just Cause
South Pasadena	Just Cause





Policy Proposal #3: Implement and Increase Tenant Protections

- Support local jurisdictions to develop and pass enhanced tenant protections such as model ordinances
 - Technical assistance to local governments aiming to pass enhanced tenant protections
 - Develop a comprehensive implementation and enforcement plan for existing tenant protections in unincorporated county
 - Currently 16 cities + unincorporated county have enhanced tenant protections
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- An eviction can have serious social and health consequences; one study found that an eviction interrupted employment, worsened physical health, and increased rates of mental health disorders such as depression and suicide.¹¹
 - The associations between eviction and child health have been well documented, including adverse birth outcomes, increased rates of food insecurity among young children, and poor physical and mental health in adolescents and young adults.¹²
 - Eviction proceedings can become part of a tenant's housing record, even in cases in which the tenant wins, so households experiencing eviction experience greater difficulty finding future housing.¹³
 - These consequences create a vicious circle that results in more housing instability and economic challenges.
 - There are only 0.72 civil legal aid attorneys per 10,000 people below 200% of the poverty line in California.¹⁴
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Policy Proposals

1. RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR FUTURE/PROSPECTIVE RENT
 2. ANTI-HARASSMENT ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS
 3. IMPLEMENT AND INCREASE TENANT PROTECTIONS
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Thank You!

For questions or feedback, please
email us at

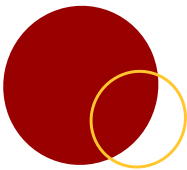
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- [2] *Id.*
- [3] *Id.*
- [4] David Wagner, *As LA Evictions Rise, City Controller Releases Map Showing Where Renters Are Getting Pushed Out*, LAIST (2023), <https://laist.com/news/housing-homelessness/los-angeles-city-eviction-map-controller-mejia-data-housing-homelessness-lanlord-renter>.
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