

April 15, 2019

The Honorable Richard Bloom
California State Assembly
Sacramento, California



Re: AB 36 — Support

Dear Assemblymember Bloom:

East Bay For Everyone and our membership write in support of AB 36, a crucial reform of the Costa-Hawkins Rental Act.

East Bay For Everyone is a regional network of renters, homeowners, landlords, and housing advocates throughout the East Bay who organize for housing. We believe that housing is infrastructure rather than an investment, and that immediate action needs to be taken to protect low- and middle-income Californians from the rising rents caused by our severe housing shortage.

We write to express our support for Assembly Bill 36. Skyrocketing rents in California have reached a crisis level, affecting communities throughout the state. All of our membership is affected, whether by seeing friends and family priced out of California entirely or themselves facing an uncertain future in the state and housing insecurity. The solution to the housing crisis is more housing, the best tenant laws protect tenants regardless of their local politics, but action is needed now. Rent control is a valuable tool to providing housing security to millions of California tenants.

At the ballot box in Nov 2018, Berkeley passed a sensible package of rent control reforms that we supported, including allowing rent control to come into effect after 20 years. AB 36 would allow these policies to come into active law. If AB 36 passes we will fight for similar legislation in other East Bay cities, to extend rent control protections to more tenants.

An overlooked problem caused by Costa-Hawkins is that it has no explicit provision to replace rent controlled units. This creates an uncertain future for rent-controlled apartments and the entire program. Larger cities with more legal resources manage to work around this with developer agreements, but Berkeley has not. AB 36 addresses this issue and offer cities the flexibility they need to design a coherent rent control program.

Sincerely,

The 1,000 members and supporters of East Bay for Everyone