



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area**

September 2, 2019

Chair Margaret Abe-Koga and Members Chris Clark and Lucas Ramirez  
Council CSFRA Subcommittee

Re: Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Council CSFRA Subcommittee item 5.1

The LWV would like to comment on some of the possible modifications to CSFRA that the subcommittee discussed including in a ballot initiative. As we stated, our local LWV did a comprehensive study of rent stabilization and just cause programs throughout California after CSFRA was passed by the voters. We concluded that the Mountain View charter amendment was fair to landlords and tenants and benefits the entire community by providing more stable housing. Therefore, we would be opposed to changes that undermine the basic principles of CSFRA.

Two proposed modifications are particularly concerning. First, we believe the voters understood when they voted for Measure V that tying annual rent increases to CPI is key to making rent increases reasonable. The majority of cities with rent control in California, especially those with similar programs and especially those with the longest-running programs, use CPI as their standard. San Francisco, for example allows only 60% of CPI, while Berkeley allows 65% and Santa Monica 75%. By these standards, Mountain View's CSFRA which uses 100% of CPI seems very reasonable. A higher annual increase would make it difficult for tenants who do not typically get raises as high as CPI.

The second main concern is building in too much flexibility. We acknowledge that there are some parts of CSFRA that could be modified or tweaked. For example, the term duplex should be clarified, and this probably must be done through a charter amendment. Streamlined applications for seismic upgrades could probably be done without a charter amendment, according to the RHC attorneys. We understand the subcommittee's concern that there may be environmental sustainability improvements, such as EV charging stations, that will not be required or be a code enforcement issue. Therefore, a charter amendment that references limited capital improvements that the City wants to incent as being eligible for streamlined processing might be advisable.

However, we believe that giving the RHC the discretion to change basic elements of CSFRA, such as who is covered by CSFRA (perhaps opening up the issue of means-testing) or changing the vacancy rate that triggers sunset of CSFRA, would significantly gut CSFRA, even if Council approval of these changes were to be required. We could not support a ballot initiative that gives such open-ended discretion to the RHC and/or Council and we believe the voters would not support this either.

Donna Yobs

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