



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

November 10, 2019

Mayor Matichak and Members of the City Council  
City of Mountain View  
500 Castro Street  
Mountain View, CA 94041

Re: Council Meeting Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> – Agenda Item #7.1 Potential CSFRA Amendments

The LWV would like to comment once again on some of the possible modifications to CSFRA that the Council is considering in a City-initiated amendment. We repeat that 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.

Initially, **we recommend that the City not proceed with their own charter amendment.** We believe that the landlord initiative will fail in an election and that having two initiatives, as happened with Measure V and W will be confusing to voters.

There are very few modifications which are significant enough in the City's proposed amendment to warrant an election. Nonetheless, should the City decide to proceed with a ballot initiative, we strongly oppose changing the AGA. This is the most serious modification being considered. As Staff has pointed out, most cities with rent control in California, especially those with similar programs and with the longest-running programs, use CPI as their standard, with a percentage less than CPI being common. The two Santa Clara County cities allowing 5% rent increases do not allow banking and Los Gatos does not have a comprehensive rent stabilization program like Mountain View's. By these standards, Mountain View's CSFRA which uses 100% of CPI seems very reasonable and fair to landlords. A higher annual increase would make it difficult for tenants who do not typically get raises as high as CPI. Tying annual rent increases to CPI is one of the core principles of CSFRA.

We do not think it is necessary to include streamlined applications for qualifying capital improvements that would then not be subject to the fair rate of return standard, which is once again a core principle of CSFRA. It seems possible that if seismic upgrades are made mandatory, streamlined applications could be developed for these within the existing fair rate of return guidelines of CSFRA. Should the City decide to allow these expedited procedures, we recommend they be limited very narrowly.

Council should work quickly to pass an ordinance regarding mobile home park space and clarify in that ordinance how the funding will be provided if RHC is asked to monitor this ordinance.

Most of the other proposed modifications are minor clarifications that do not warrant a ballot initiative, in our opinion.

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