

09-0855

MOTION

RULES & GOVERNMENT

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Local tenant activists and apartment owner associations found a rare area of consensus recently in their response to the proposal by the City of Lancaster to amend their rental housing ordinance to permit City staff to withhold business licenses from landlords who want to rent to low-income tenants with federal Section 8 vouchers, a program that provides rental subsidies for the needy.

Lancaster officials claim that more than 2,300 residential units are occupied by Section 8 tenants in their city, about 12% of the total number of vouchers administered by the Housing Authority of Los Angeles County. Officials at the County's Housing Authority acknowledged that Lancaster has the highest number of Section 8 contracts countywide. But they put the number at 2,100, or 10% of the County's 20,095 administered contracts.

The City of Los Angeles also provides more than of its share of services to the homeless and many other underprivileged groups but has never sought to pass along its burden to its neighbors. We have also supported state legislation to require that cities provide for locations to site homeless shelters in their cities, whether they want to or not, and provide for low-income housing.

Lancaster's proposed amended ordinance would bar licenses to landlords who intend to rent residential property to Section 8 voucher-holders, depriving apartment owners already suffering from high vacancy rates with a property right to rent to Section 8 voucher holders, who, while low-income, represent guaranteed income at a time when many owners are struggling to pay their mortgages.

More than 100,000 people are currently on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers in Los Angeles County. Lancaster is an attractive location to many renters because of the affordability of rents, the quality of housing, and the willingness of landlords to participate in the Section 8 program. If federal vouchers are banned from Lancaster apartments the City will likely be filled with empty apartment units.

With over 70,000 homeless in the County, Lancaster's proposal has been attacked by housing activists as an attack on low-income people which, if allowed to stand, would represent a dangerous precedent of selfishness that other areas might feel encouraged to copy. There have to be remedies short of this proposal to address concerns of Lancaster officials about the concentration of vouchers.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City of Los Angeles encourage that the County and U.S. Department on Housing and Urban Development assist the City of Lancaster in finding a way to address their concerns about the concentration of Section 8 tenants without resorting to restricting the acceptance of vouchers by apartment owners.

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PRESENTED BY:


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