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Brianda Negrete *Public Comment - Community Services*

From: Frank Rodriguez <frank@causenow.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 10:59 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Public Comment from CAUSE
Attachments: Santa Barbara County Budget Request.pdf

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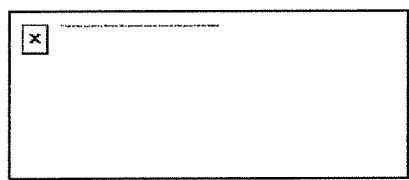
Hello,

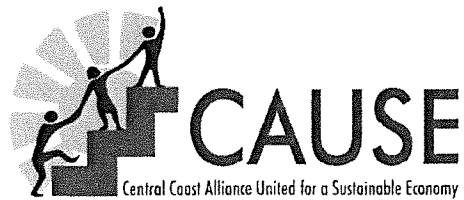
Attached you will find public comment from CAUSE in relation to the Budget and Tenant Rights.

Thank you,

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4/20/23

Chair Williams and Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

CAUSE continues to prioritize organizing and advocating in support of low income renters as the housing crisis continues to displace many from our community, at the detriment of our region as a whole.

The County budget should reflect this reality and invest in holistic programs to mitigate the effects of the worsening housing crisis - including increased levels of homelessness, overcrowding, and displacement.

This comes in direct response to the conversation started by the County Board of Supervisors about the mass displacement of Tenants in Isla Vista, and the need to ensure we implement real tenant protections, not just speedbumps.

Tenant protections are often the missing piece of the puzzle – and they should be seriously considered alongside any conversations about meeting our region’s housing needs, like future housing construction. Santa Barbara County’s tenants are disproportionately impacted by the limited vacancy and availability of housing stock. Tenants, especially low-income families, are an accident or parking ticket away from being evicted.

Santa Barbara County must continue conversations on how to improve tenant protections.

At the moment, the County can take proactive steps in its budget to address this uncertainty.

- **Housing Trust Fund**
 - Similar to the City of Santa Barbara, we support the creation of a fund that actively helps finance and seeks different funding sources for low income housing, and leverages statewide and national resources to match funding for affordable housing development.

- **Tenant Right to Counsel Program**
 - Similar to the program recently passed by the City of Santa Barbara and to longstanding programs in other municipalities, we support the creation of by-right legal service or legal service fund for tenants who are under threat of being evicted. This addresses the inequality of the existing legal system which leaves

tenants without access to legal representation in high-stakes eviction proceedings.

- **Homelessness Prevention Fund**

- Similar to Ventura County, This program would allocate funds to tenants who are at-risk of experiencing homelessness (80% or less of AMI). If the tenant is experiencing an economic hardship and is at risk of being evicted (has received a notice letter or is at-risk of missing their rent payment). In addition, if a tenant is evicted, the fund could be used to pay for upcoming security deposits and first month's rent.