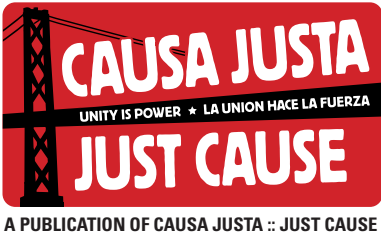


JUST CAUSES



DREAMING TO WIN: Justice for All

By Maria Zamudio



Photo: David Lumb | August 17 | animalnewyork.com

The disappointment and devastation felt in 2010 when the federal DREAM Act did not pass in Senate was huge. Not only because of the amount of work that went into getting the federal DREAM Act to a Senate vote, but because the “allies” DREAMers thought they had (Senate Democrats) failed to provide the support the

bill needed. The bill fell 5 votes short, 5 votes short of providing a direct path to citizenship for millions and their families.

However it did not dishearten those pushing the DREAM movement forward and it served to clarify several things. Such as, what DREAMERS could realistically

expect from elected officials; that creative options needed to be developed; and that there would have to be a broadening of goals leading to a shift in the framing of the DREAM movement. It could no longer be undocumented students and the rights they deserve (as high achieving young people), but rather it had to become a

vision for the decriminalization of migration and against the marginalization of all immigrants.

This is the context in which the deferred action victory must be seen if we are to fully realize this vision.

While Deferred Action provides the reliefs for DREAMers that were denied in 2010 and is a much needed to win, it is not the end of the fight for multiple reasons. One being that Deferred Action is not a path to citizenship, it is temporary, and can be revoked at any time, as it is an administrative decision and not a law.

The President through administrative power has decided to remove the threat of deportation and provide work permits for youth under 30 with no criminal record, who are in school or have a high school diploma/GED, arrived in the US before the age of 16 and have been continuously in the country since 2007.

This decision has a lot of specific prerequisites, it provides relief for only a small group of people and runs the risk of being used to leverage one “type” of immigrant

SEE DREAM, PAGE 6

National Housing Crisis Continues

Foreclosures Still Hurting Our Communities

By Robbie Clark

Gail Leeks’ family is fighting to keep a home that’s been in their family for two generations. Gail’s mother, Marjorie Gibson passed away after a battle with cancer. After Majorie passed away, Wells Fargo Bank sent the family a foreclosure notice. When Gail contacted the bank, giving them notice that her mother left the home to her in her will, the bank refused to negotiate the loan or give her loan information because they claim that they can only negotiate with the borrower. But after a petition was circulated and 160,000 people signed, Wells Fargo backed off, and is currently working with the family.

Unfortunately stories with a positive outcome like the one above are few and far between. The housing crisis continues and all of us are fighting in every way we can to make change possible.

According to a report by Urban Strategies Council, “Who Owns Your Neighborhood: The Role of Investors in Post-Foreclosure Oakland”, 42% of all foreclosed homes in Oakland have been purchased by private, out-of-town investors, and off those properties, 93% of them are located in Oakland’s flatland neighborhoods.

These are the same communities that continue to suffer from a history of disinvestment, redlining and abuses by predatory banks and landlords. Foreclosures are the latest in a long line of exploitative policies and practices that we have had to battle. Black and Latino families, elders, people with disabilities and those with little or no English language capacity are some of the hardest hit by this crisis.

It is horrifying experience to witness an auction where foreclosed homes are put out to sale. Investors show up with cash in hand, talking into the cell phones with business partners and wheeling and dealing with each other. The impersonal way in which the homes of real people are bought and sold like marbles, is heart wrenching to watch and can bring on feelings of great outrage. In every case, homes are being sold at prices far below what the homeowners owe in their loans. But instead of refinancing these loans with the people who already live there, the banks would much rather

“42% of all foreclosed homes in Oakland have been purchased by private, out-of-town investors, and off those properties, 93% of them are located in Oakland’s flatland neighborhoods.”

sell it at a greatly reduced rate to an investor — often leaving the family with nowhere to go.

CREATES A RIPPLE OF HARMFUL EFFECTS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

As homeowners are pushed out more people are driven into the rental market. This drives the price of rent steadily up. In Oakland, the average cost to rent has gone up 14% since 2010 to over \$1,800.00 and San Francisco has seen a nearly 13% increase in the same time period, bringing San Francisco county’s average rent to more than \$2,700.00.

As the foreclosure problem evolves, more tenants are being swept up in it. Foreclosures on tenant occupied properties have gone up in the last few years (*see diagram below*). There are over one million tenants that have been foreclosed on in California., with 175,000 tenants being impacted in 2011 alone, according to a report by Tenants Together, “Total Renters Directly Affected by Foreclosure.”

Both Oakland and San Francisco are cities where the majority of residents are tenants, which means that many people are at risk of homelessness, displacement and other forms of housing insecurity.

COMMUNITIES HAVE TO FIGHT BACK!

More people in our cities and around the country are standing up to this crisis.

Causa Justa, along with our national alliance, Right to the City is joining with community organizations and Occupy groups across the nation to put the pressure on the one bank that ALL taxpayers are shareholders in – Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

SEE CRISIS, PAGE 4



DREAM ACT VICTORY: What Does The Deferred Action Application Mean For You?

Francisco Ugarte, Senior Immigration Attorney, Dolores Street Community Services

On June 15, 2012, the Obama administration made history by announcing one of the most significant and favorable changes to immigration law in more than a decade – Deferred Action for Early Childhood Arrivals to the United States.

Under this new program, most undocumented youth who arrived in the U.S. before the age of 16, are 30 years old or younger, and who have been physically present in the U.S. for 5 years, are eligible for Deferred Action.

The program was put in place as a result of the courageous and extraordinary political movement of young undocumented people who grew up in the United States but, due to an irrational and inhumane immigration legal system, could not obtain lawful immigration status.

WHAT IS DEFERRED ACTION?

Technically, deferred action is a form of discretionary relief, where the government formally prioritizes the way it uses its resources. The concept of deferred action is historically rooted in the law. This new deferred action program greatly expands this principal to apply to a broad category of young people living in the U.S. without lawful immigration status.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DEFERRED ACTION?

Differed action provides work authorization and the opportunity to remain in the United States lawfully. However, there is no path to citizenship, and there is no right to vote in federal or state elections. Individuals will not be able to petition for other family members. In addition, Deferred Action is discretionary, and may be revoked at any time. Individuals who are

convicted of a significant misdemeanor or felony while on Deferred Action status may be at risk of deportation.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR DEFERRED ACTION?

1. Arrived in the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
2. Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
3. Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012;
4. Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and,

5. Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety. (*Note that traffic violations, including citations for driving without a license, do not constitute “significant” misdemeanors. However, anyone with any criminal record at all should consult with an attorney prior to applying for deferred action)

HOW LONG DOES THE DEFERRED ACTION PROGRAM LAST?

Under the current program, work authorization under the new Deferred Action program will last for two years. Deferred Action will be renewable after two years, but it is unclear how the renewal process will last. It is unclear whether a different

SEE VICTORY, PAGE 6

WE ARE CAUSA JUSTA :: JUST CAUSE

Causa Justa :: Just Cause is a multi-racial, grassroots organization building community leadership to achieve justice for working class San Francisco and Oakland residents. In 2010, CJJC emerged from the strategic collaboration of two powerful organizations: St. Peter’s Housing Committee and Just Cause Oakland. These two organizations represent more than 30 years of combined experience working toward housing and racial justice for African-Americans and Latinos. With offices in San Francisco’s Mission neighborhood, and East and West Oakland, we are a force for justice and unity among Black and Latino communities.

Our work includes protecting tenant’s rights and housing security through our tenant’s rights clinics; helping low income homeowners fight foreclosure and keep their homes; engaging community members in voter education and mobilization to affect ballot initiatives that impact their lives; as well as supporting community members to advocate for policy changes through grassroots campaigns. CJJC strives to lift up the leadership and voices of community residents to build power and make change for our neighborhoods and cities.

TO CONTACT US

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3268 San Pablo Ave.
Oakland, CA 94608

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9124 International Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94603

Oakland Telephone:
510-763-5877

Check out the Causa Justa :: Just Cause website or join the email list for regular updates at – www.cjjc.org
You can also email us at: info@cjjc.org
Follow us on Twitter at [causajusta1](https://twitter.com/causajusta1)
'Like' us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/causajusta

San Francisco Office:
2301 Mission St.
Suite 201
San Francisco, CA 94110

San Francisco Telephone:
(415) 487-9203

JUST CAUSES THE NEWSPAPER

“Just Causes” is the community newspaper of Causa Justa :: Just Cause. We have been printing two issues per year since 2007 covering stories and events relevant to our members and community supporters. We would like to hear your thoughts and opinions about the paper. If you are interested in seeing something covered, submitting content for the paper, purchasing an ad, giving us feedback or anything else, contact us at the information below.

The views represented in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the advertisers.

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THE TRUST ACT

Our Work Continues With Resilience and Courage

By Cinthya Muñoz, Immigrant Rights Organizer & Maria Poblet, Executive Director

October 1 was a historic moment for all who were awaiting Governor Brown’s decision on the Trust Act. Historic in that the sitting so-called “progressive” governor of California vetoed several bills that would have uplifted, improved and made safe the lives of the immigrant majority, people of color, and working-class people — the 99% — in California

We are deeply disappointed in the governor’s veto of SB1081 as well as the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, the Farm Worker Protection Bill, and the UC Workers Bill — bills that would have chipped away at the injustices and indignities suffered every day, and all grassroots bills in support of the immigrant majority, people of color, working class people - the 99% in CA.

Already, 80,000 CA residents have been deported thanks to the agreement Gov. Brown signed with ICE when he was Attorney General, and now he has ensured thousands more families will be torn apart by ICE and the racist S-Comm program. He has chosen a legacy of enabling the separation of families. Meanwhile, the gap between rich and poor in our country has reached an all-time high. Which begs the question: Who does Jerry Brown work for?

Our fight did not start with this important piece of legislation, and it will not end with the veto. We are much stronger, more organized, and more driven, and we will work to put an end to S-Comm.

This heavy loss reminds us how much work we have before us to build power in oppressed communities, build alliances, and build a long-term movement for systemic anti-racist change. And, we are reminded of our vision for movement building that is much deeper than any electoral cycle: In every barrio, on every block, organize! belong together. And we will make sure it is so.

Our communities, our families Pa’lante ■

Photo:CJJC Archives

Corporate America Has Hijacked the Peoples' Bank

WHO ARE FANNIE MAE AND FREDDIE MAC?

They are taxpayer-owned government sponsored entities that originate loans and guarantee home loans that banks and mortgage companies sell to borrowers. We should control them and they should serve the needs of the taxpayers, not the 1%.

OUR DEMANDS:

1. Principal reduction to real value for all underwater homeowners
2. End all Fannie-Freddie evictions. Accept rent, respect renters’ rights
3. Sell foreclosed property to occupants, non-profits or community-controlled institutions at real value. Not to Investors and Hedge Funds!
4. Turn vacant REO property over to community controlled institutions to create permanent affordable housing for renters, homeless families/individuals, and former homeowners. (don’t bulk sell at steep discounts to Hedge Funds, Big Banks & Investors)

PARTIAL LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Right to the City National alliance (RTTC)
- New Road—a 9 member regional coalition that uses the “sword and shield model;” it includes the following RTTC members — City Life/Vida Urbana (CLVU), Springfield No One Leaves (SNOL) and Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE) in Providence, RI
- Mid-Hudson No One Leaves – New York, NY
- Causa Justa :: Just Cause – Bay Area, CA
- Miami Workers Center – Miami, FL
- Strategic Actions for a Just Economy – Los Angeles, CA
- Occupy Our Homes – Atlanta, GA
- Alliance for Californians for Community Empowerment – Los Angeles, CA ■

VICTORY: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

presidential administration will renew the program. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has stated that he opposes this program; however he has not publicly stated he would repeal Deferred Action.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR DEFERRED ACTION?

Deferred action applications under this program consist of three separate applications:

- 1) I-821D
- 2) I-765
- 3) I-765WS

The applications are available on the Internet at the USCIS website (which is www.uscis.gov/). Applicants must include documents proving that they qualify for the program, approved documents include –

- 1) School records
- 2) Medical records
- 3) Bills
- 4) Employment records
- 5) Tax records

(*Note for other approved documents please consult an attorney)

Copies of original documents are acceptable, so long as they are legible and correct copies of original documents. Applicants should focus on obtaining documents establishing continuous presence between June 15, 2007 and June 15, 2012.

WHERE CAN I GET FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN APPLYING FOR DEFERRED ACTION?

Several organizations within the San Francisco Immigrant Legal & Education Network (SFILEN) are providing free legal assistance to prospective Deferred Action applicants who are San Francisco residents, including Dolores Street Community Services, Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), Asian Law Caucus, and Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach. In addition, Legal Services for Children provides free legal services for those age 21 and younger. Several other organizations provide fee and low cost legal assistance. Please contact your neighborhood non-profit organization for assistance or referrals to the appropriate agency.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS IN APPLYING FOR DEFERRED ACTION?

There may be risks for applicants who have criminal records, who have engaged in fraud, or who have falsified their application. Federal immigration authorities have stated that there will be no information sharing between USCIS (the federal agency responsible for processing applications) and ICE (the immigration police) in the application process unless there is fraud, criminal issues, or national security issues.

HOW DO I MAKE SURE THAT I QUALIFY?

Because the stakes are so high, it is strongly recommended that applicants consult with an attorney prior to applying for deferred action.

While there are limits and risks to Deferred Action, this is also a unique and groundbreaking moment for undocumented young people, who earned this victory after waging a long and difficult struggle for some kind of relief. And, though Deferred Action is discretionary, the political power of undocumented young people is undeniable. Deferred Action should be a building block for future immigration reform—where finally, undocumented youth who grew up in the United States can be recognized in the law as equals, citizens, and full participants in our society.

For more information:
Dolores Street Community Services: www.dsccs.org
CARECEN: www.carecensf.org
Asian Law Caucus: www.asian-lawcaucus.org
Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach: www.apilegaloutreach.org
Legal Services for Children: <http://www.lsc-sf.org>

Photo courtesy <http://staffblogs.etruth.com>

Slumlord Fined Record \$800,000 For Deplorable Housing Conditions

By Lucia Kimble

Rat and cockroach infestations, lack of sanitation, bedbugs, leaks and mold – for many working – class tenants in San Francisco, these problems are daily occurrences that compromise their health and present uninhabitable conditions, especially when they are unaddressed by landlords and despite tenants paying their monthly rent.

“Tenants are often scared to report repair issues because they fear retaliation, however retaliation is against the law. Knowing our rights helps the community as a whole and sends the message to landlords that they will be held accountable.”

— Paige Kumm, CJJC Housing Counselor

Tenants living in the 32 properties owned by notorious San Francisco slumlord, James Blanding, suffered substandard conditions for years. Blanding ignored maintenance requests allowing the units become unhealthy, deplorable places to live. Most of these units, located in the Bayview district, are home to many low-income, Black and Latino tenants.

Since 2001, The Department of Building Inspections has recorded over 467 code violations by Blanding. The San Francisco



Photo: CJJC archives

Chronicle reported that renters in more than 100 units had to cope with sewage spills, flooding, mold, rodents, crumbling walls, ceilings and stairways.

One tenant, Vela Valentino shared her story with the San Francisco Chronicle. In the three years that she’s lived in her one-bedroom apartment on Revere Avenue, “There’s always something wrong with it. Always,” said Valentino, 26, who lives with her 3-year-old child. The sinks and toilets have leaked constantly, flooding her apartment. “I needed rain boots to walk in my apartment,” she said of the most egregious incident. “I went to work, I came home, and it looked like somebody built a swimming pool in my bathroom, in my living room and my kitchen.”

It took five months for repairs to be completed and during that

time mold appeared and severe water damage caused the ceiling of the unit below to cave in, not once but twice, the second time after the landlord reported that repairs had been completed. “It’s hard when you’re a single mom, and you’re trying to do the right thing, trying to keep it together, and the landlord makes it really hard for you,” she told the Chronicle. Valentino’s story is similar that that of many others living in the 137 units reported to have suffered gross neglect.

After years of tracking violations, the Department of Building Inspection as well as the City Attorney’s office were finally able to bring some justice to tenants in July by fining Blanding a record \$800,000 for all of the violations caused by his blatant negligence. “We hope that negligent landlords everywhere will see this case, see the settlement, and take note,” James Sanbonmatsu, a

building inspector, stated to the San Francisco Chronicle.

The settlement is a major victory for tenants all across San Francisco. However, we need to continue to ensure that landlords are held accountable to upholding a tenant’s right to habitable conditions, especially in a city where rents are soaring. “When tenants don’t defend their rights, landlords take advantage and negate their responsibilities. Tenants are often scared to report repair issues because they fear retaliation, however retaliation is against the law. Knowing our rights helps the community as a whole and sends the message to landlords that they will be held accountable. Tenants have a right to a dignified standard of habitability that is upheld by the law. There is no need to sacrifice our well-being or our safety out of fear or lack of knowledge about our rights.” says Paige Kumm, tenant right’s counselor for Causa Justa who sees egregious repair cases all too often.

In San Francisco, landlords must abide by the San Francisco Housing Code, the body of law that ensure that units are habitable: free of pests, structurally sound, and with all services in working order. Tenants must inform landlords of repair requests and landlords must comply with maintenance requests. If you are a tenant living in a unit that is less than habitable, please contact our office at (415) 487-9203 to learn more about how you can defend your right to a healthy habitable unit. ■

Reports of Tenant Harassment on the Rise

By Ted Gullicksen and Maria Zamudio

Tenants living in some of San Francisco’s quickly disappearing sources for affordable housing – rent controlled units – face a particular situation when property owners wish to evict them for profit.

When Flores tried to have his rent adjusted to the legal amount through a rent board arbitration, the landlord threatened him and his wife with deportation if they showed up for the mediation date.

One of the quickest and cheapest ways to evict a tenant is by harassing them until the situation becomes unbearable and the tenant moves on their own. When they leave, the landlord has an empty unit that they can rent to new tenants at market rate rent.

Ten years ago San Francisco was changed forever as the Dot Com Boom caused record



Photo: CJJC archives

evictions and rents. Now Dot Com Boom II is again causing soaring rents and evictions as well paid high tech workers bid up rents or buy apartments right out from under the tenants living there.

We’re seeing systematic harassment by landlords on the rise as many landlords have found harassment to be the most effective way to force tenants out—thus enabling the landlord to

double or triple the rent or to sell the apartment as a million-dollar tenancy in common (TIC).

Take for instance Mr. Flores (not his real name) and his family, who have lived in an in-law in the Excelsior district since 2009. During that time his family has grown and they celebrated the birth of their twin girls and welcomed Flores’ mother-in-law to help with the

new babies for one year.

Since then, his landlord illegally increased the rent by 100 dollars. When Flores tried to have his rent adjusted to the legal amount through a rent board arbitration, the landlord threatened him and his wife with deportation if they showed up for the mediation date. It scared them into silence. It took a

HOUSING RIGHTS & RESOURCES

OAKLAND

Causa Justa:: Just Cause
West Oakland
3268 San Pablo Ave.
(510) TENANTS or (510) 836-2687

East Oakland
9124 International Blvd.
(510) TENANTS or (510) 836-2687

Oakland Residential Rent
Arbitration Board
250 Frank Ogawa Plaza
(510) 238-3721

Rene C. Davidson Courthouse
1225 Fallon St.
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 891-6003

Superior Court of Alameda County
Self-Help Center
(510) 891-6003

OAKLAND CODES & COMPLIANCE

Housing Inspectors
(510) 238-3381

Oakland Fire Prevention Bureau
(510) 238-4049

Alameda County Sheriff’s Dept
(510) 272-6910

Sheriff’s Eviction Line
(510) 272-6890

County Assessor’s Office
(to find out who owns a property)
(510) 272-3782

Alameda County Vector Control
(rodents & pests)
(510) 567-6800

Lead Poisoning Prevention
Program
(510) 567-8263

PG&E Foreclosure Hotline
(800) 850-9587

RENT & DEPOSIT ASSISTANCE

For Rent Assistance Call 2-1-1

Catholic Charities at
(510) 768-3100

HOUSING ADVOCATES

East Bay Community Law Center
(www.ebclc.org)
(510) 548-4040

Eviction Defense Center
(for help with unlawful detainers/
summons, evictions)
(510) 452-4541

Bay Area Legal Aid
(www.baylegal.org)
(510) 663-4744

Legal Advice Line
(510) 250-5270

Centro Legal de la Raza
(www.centrolegal.org)
(510) 437-1554

ECHO
(www.echofairhousing.org)
landowner/tenant counseling
& mediation
(510) 494-0496

Center for Independent Living
(www.cilberkeley.org)
(510) 763-9999

Dept Fair Employment and Housing
(www.dfeh.ca.gov)
(800) 884-1684

Tenants Together
Foreclosure Hotline
(888) 495-8020

SAN FRANCISCO

Causa Justa :: Just Cause
2301 Mission St., Suite 201
(415) 487-9203
Spanish-speaking counselors.

SF Rent Board
25 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA
(415) 252-4602
Implementation and Reinforcement
of the SF Rent Ordinance

Eviction Defense Collaborative
995 Market Street, Suite 1200
San Francisco, CA
(415) 947-0797
Help with Unlawful Detainers
and other eviction lawsuits

RADCO (a program of EDC)
995 Market Street, Suite 1200
San Francisco, CA
(415) 947-0867 ext. 4
Rental Assistance for families
and single adults

Catholic Charities
180 Howard St., #100
(415) 972-1301
Rental Assistance for single adults

Community Boards
3130 24th Street
San Francisco, CA
(415) 920-3820
Issues between tenants or neighbors

San Francisco Housing Authority
440 Turk Street
San Francisco, CA
(415) 554-1200
Public Housing and Section 8

Human Rights Commission
25 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA
(415) 252-2500
Discrimination & Harassment cases

Edward DeMarco
Federal Housing Finance Agency
400 7th Street, SW Washington, DC 20024

Hassle-Free Housing Ordinance: What is it?

During the first dot com boom, harassment—as a mean of eviction—evolved into a business model. Large, corporate landlords began adding to their staffs “Relocation Specialists.” More accurately, these employees were paid thugs, hired to intimidate tenants into moving out. Far too often, these harassment tactics worked.

Harassment became so bad that in 2008, San Francisco voters overwhelmingly passed Prop M, an amendment to the city’s rent control law which defined over a dozen practices as harassment, made these practices illegal, and enabled tents to file for significant rent reductions when being harassed.

The last piece—allowing tenants get rent reductions—was especially crucial. But landlords sued and the landlord-friendly courts ruled that the Rent Board does not have the power to reduce rents because of tenant harassment (unsurprisingly to tenants, the Judge who initially ruled parts of Prop M invalid was caught last year harassing her tenants).

Legislation now before the San Francisco Board of Supervisors promises to make fighting harassment easier. Co-proposed by Supervisors Christina Olague and John Avalos and supported by Supervisors David Campos and Jane Kim, it was introduced before the board of Supervisors July 31st, the new ordinance would:

- 1. Expand the list of actions defined as harassment.
- 2. Give tenants two new avenues to fight harassment that do not require actual damages or attorneys.

- A. First, harassment will be defined as an illegal eviction attempt enabling tenants to file a “Wrongful Eviction Petition” at the SF Rent Board. The Rent Board will then investigate the allegation of harassment, hold a hearing on the complaint, and issue a ruling. This action is expected to stop much of the harassment as landlords see that city officials are watching and realizing the harassment could lead to action by the City Attorney or District Attorney.
- B. In addition, the new ordinance provides that tenants can be awarded up to \$2,000 in punitive damages for each instance of harassment.
- C. It also provides that tenants can sue in Small Claims Court to get these awards.
- D. And finally, tenants will be able to sue after getting the Rent Board decision on their wrongful eviction case, meaning they will have good solid evidence they can submit to the court.

The motivation for harassment is eviction, so treating it legally as a wrongful eviction attempt is an innovative and effective way to stop the harassment.

The legislation is expected to have its first hearing in either late September or early October. It is expected to pass but could face a Mayoral veto so tenant organizations are organizing to put pressure on San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, hoping to convince him that the city shouldn’t tolerate harassment by landlords. ■

Freddie Mac and BofA, you won’t take our home away!

By Antonio Venegas

The experience of the Perez family echoes with the stories of the over 40,000 foreclosures that have or are currently taking place in Oakland. The family suffered a loss of income when Andres Perez lost his job, after years of consistently and faithfully paying their monthly mortgage of \$1646 to Bank of America. Despite repeated attempts Bank of America refused to give the family a fair loan modification. Instead they turned around and

sold the family’s home at auction January 30, 2012. The family is continuing to fight to have the sale of their home be rescinded. Causa Justa :: Just Cause organizers met the Perez family during our summer outreach to families in foreclosed properties. We supported them in making their auction action a successful one and are committed to helping them pressure Freddie Mac and Bank of America to give back their home. ■



Photo: Antonio Venegas

Tenant Takes On Union Bank and Wins!

By Maria Zamudio

Maria M. and her family had been renting their San Francisco for more than three years when they learned that the home was being foreclosed. Like many tenants who have been affected by the foreclosure crisis she was caught off guard — receiving little to no information in a language she could understand from the property owner, real estate agent, or bank.

Because she is a tenant in San Francisco, Maria and her family had a series of rights that protected their right to stay in their home. Rights that they defended and which resulted in over a year of peace of mind.

Maria did everything she was supposed to do to ensure that her tenancy was protected and respected. She found out who owned her home (Union Bank), she sent them the information they required regarding her lease, she began to pay rent, she cooperated with inspections and set up an open house schedule so that

prospective buyers could view the home. All while continuously reminding the real estate agent who she was in the most contact with, that she did not wish to move, would not accept a cash for keys deal and that she had the full support of the San Francisco Rent Ordinance behind her decision.

Her situation was not perfect, she was in the limbo, with the banks becoming reluctant landlords with an end goal to sell the home. Nevertheless, it was working out and, as she explained to CJJC counselors, she felt like she had some control of the situation.

This was until she received a letter from the lawyers of Union Bank announcing that in 60 days a \$1200.00 rent increase would be taking effect and if she wished to continue living in her home she would have to pay the new amount.

The increase would increase her rent by 100%. Everything she thought she knew about her

situation changed.

COSTA HAWKINS

What happened to Maria was that she had received a Costa Hawkins Notice. Housing rights organizations recognize Costa Hawkins as an unjust law at the state level. It is designed to undermine local rent control ordinances by creating exceptions to rent control and allowing property owners to significantly increase the rent of units to market rate level.

In San Francisco there are two situations that make a tenant vulnerable to a Costa Hawkins rent increase.

- 1. If a tenant was a sub-tenant and the original tenant has left or,
- 2. If the tenant lives in a single family home and there are no in-law units, or rooms rented on the property (that means there really is only one unit being rented by one household).

Maria’s case fell under the second loophole. Union Bank lawyers told Maria’s housing counselor that the family lived in a single family home and that the Bank wanted to bring the rent up to market rate.

The lawyers were clear that it did not matter to them that this family (like all families) have every right to homes that they can afford. The extra \$1200 a month the bank would receive would not make much of a difference for a corporation like Union Bank, but it would create an impossible situation for this family that would probably result in eviction.

“Well that is just fine with us, an empty home is easier to sell anyway,” was the response of the bank lawyer. It became clear to Maria and her housing counselor

that if they were going to protect her right to stay, they would have to talk to the bank directly, which was purely a delay tactic to make things harder for tenants like Maria to exercise their rights.

So they contacted the bank and informed them that their actions were clearly showing they valued profits over people and that to Union Bank an \$1200 extra a month was more valuable to them than the well being of a family. Housing counselors have felt the consequences of this attitude for years. However, when situations arise that clearly illustrate bank and corporations flawed logic they do not like it. It is the peek behind the curtain that is the beginning of holding them accountable to their actions.

SAFE FOR NOW

Union Bank was no different and they rapidly dropped the Costa Hawkins. Apparently, \$1200 a month was not worth all the bad publicity — for now.

Maria’s home is safe until a new owner takes possession and the fight begins again. But this fight is bigger than just Maria’s home. What we are seeing with the foreclosure crisis and its’ effect on tenants is an intersection of issues that highlight the gaps in tenant protections in California.

Costa Hawkins has been used to displace tenant for years and now banks use it as part of their eviction arsenal. Housing organizations recognize Costa Hawkins must be overturned and replaced by laws that protect tenants on a statewide level.

When tenants stand their ground and fight they can win. Maria and the courage she had to take on a Big Bank shows that it pays to stand up for one’s housing rights. ■

CRISIS: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

These two entities, control half of all the residential properties in foreclosure in Oakland and San Francisco. Nationally, they control over 7 million underwater mortgages (properties where the homeowner owes more on their loan to the bank than the home is worth). There is a growing call for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to reduce principals on loans and forgive the debts of borrowers who are in danger of losing their home to foreclosure because payments are too high.

Join our local campaign in Oakland and San Francisco to take back our homes. We need to build a movement to demand that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac serve the 99% and not the corporate interests that benefit from the evictions and displacement in our communities.

Please sign and mail the postcard below to Edward J. DeMarco, the director of the Federal Housing Finance Authority (FHFA) who is in charge of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. DeMarco has blocked a plan by the Obama administration to forgive some of the mortgage debt owed by underwater homeowners and is the reason why Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have not changed their policies to keep people in their homes. ■

HEARTH Act to Improve Housing Conditions for American Indians

By Billy Trice Jr.

President Obama recently signed H.R.205 known as the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act (HEARTH) which will improve housing conditions for American Indians as well as

boosting their economic development on reservations. It will also help them build their homes as well as approving development for other projects.

Under the HEARTH Act, American Indians will develop

their own leasing regulations and if approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs(BIA), they won’t have to go back for every single project to the agency.

National Congress of American Indians President Jefferson Keel

was present for the signing of the law and said in a statement, “This is a very good new law for tribal self-determination. ...This will streamline business development and housing development and create jobs on reservations across the country.” ■

Dear Edward DeMarco FHFA Director,

I'm a taxpayer and I support the Federal Housing Finance Agency granting principal reductions to homeowners seeking loan modifications. It has been proven that principal reduction will be better for our economies and help keep people housed. Freddie and Fannie are the People's banks and should respond to the needs of the communities that have been suffering due to foreclosure. Millions of families would be able to stay in their homes if Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae would agree to change their policies to include writing down principal to current market value. Modify the loans with principal reductions.

Sincerely,

Community Demands Answers to Chevron Fire

By Communities for a Better Environment and Asian Pacific Environmental Network

For the second time in five years, a fire at the Chevron refinery crude unit in Richmond has put workers and neighbors in critical danger. By its own admission in reports filed with the State of California Emergency Management System, this industrial disaster allowed for the release of toxic chemicals.

As it turns out, 1600 residents were reported to have visited the hospital with complaints of burning eyes, noses, throats, headaches and difficulty breathing. Some of the chemicals released during the fire have been shown to cause lung cancer; most trigger asthma.

For more than 30 years Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) has been helping the residents of Richmond to hold Chevron accountable for exposing the community to numerous environmental and health risks on a daily basis. Click here to read more about our work in Richmond. Community members are experts on the impacts of the refinery in Richmond. While we wait for reports from government officials and Chevron's paid spokespeople, the eyes, ears and throats of our members tell us what we have known for years. This refinery operation is dangerous to the community and needs to change the way it operates.

MULTI-LINGUAL WARNING SYSTEMS FAILED

According to the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, (APEN) to compound Chevron's lack of safety accountability in the refinery fire/explosion, the multi-lingual warning systems that APEN and our allies fought for and won, failed.

Many residents reported not being properly notified and are now experiences dizziness,



Fototaker.net | http://www.csb.gov/assets/Investigation/original/Chevron_Vapor_Cloud_0101

headaches and other symptoms of exposure to toxins. We are documenting community stories so that we can build better protocols in the future.

In the first SIX months of this year, Chevron made \$13.7 BILLION in profits. Chevron has consistently chosen short-term profit over protection of residents. For decades, Richmond residents have advocated for Chevron to replace its old equipment as soon as possible. Chevron refused to simply update its unsafe equipment and instead attempted to deceive the community and EXPAND its facility in Richmond. The project was really about building the infrastructure to refine heavier and dirtier grades of crude oil. We think that Chevron will trot out the "refinery safety" Trojan horse once again. We can not allow them to do succeed.

CBE has been fighting for environmental injustice in Richmond through litigation and community organizing. A CBE lawsuit stopped plans in 2011 for a refinery expansion that would have enabled Chevron to process dirty crude oil. The expansion would have meant an annual increase of nearly a million tons of greenhouse gases and toxic emissions in local neighborhoods—but CBE defeated it with allies at Asian Pacific Environmental Network, West County Toxics Coalition and Earthjustice.

Chevron needs to take full responsibility for this latest disaster. Responsibility in this case means Chevron will:

- Fund an independent community inquiry into the causes and impacts of this accident
- Provide full medical care

and coverage for refinery workers and community members impacted by the fire

- Replace fossil fuel emissions by partially repowering the refinery with solar installed on-site and in the community-providing renewable energy jobs
- Respond to earlier demands from CBE and our allies, including APEN and the West County Toxics Coalition, to replace their aging equipment
- Replace its current leak detection system with one that finds and plugs leaks from dangerous hydrocarbon and hydrogen sulfide leaks.

For more info please go to both the APEN website at apen4ej.org and the CBE website at www.cbecal.org/ ■

Every 36 Hours

By Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

In July, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) issued a study titled, "Every 36 Hours: Report on the Extrajudicial Killings of Black People by Police, Security Guards or Self-Appointed Law Enforcers."

"Every 36 Hours" documents the police killing of 110 Black people between January – June 30, 2012. This is only the tip of the iceberg, given that the methodology used in developing the report focused primarily on major metropolitan areas and mid-sized cities. If smaller towns and suburban areas were included in the study, the numbers would likely increase. Further still, we fear that given the current climate of xenophobia and racial hostility, that the numbers of those murdered from other disenfranchised communities, particularly Latinos and immigrants, will equal, if not exceed those of Blacks.

Unfortunately, police brutality and murder are nothing new to Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities, as the killings in Anaheim and Dallas clearly illustrate. Nor are periods of intense racially motivated repression and the pursuit of deconstructive public policy targeting the human rights and civil liberties of these communities. Two notable periods of reaction that are quite instructive, include the period of deconstruction from the 1870's to the early 1890's that witnessed the institutionalization of Jim Crow apartheid, and the 1970's and 80's which witnessed massive resistance to the gains of the Civil Rights and Workers' Movements.

The current question is how can this carnage be stopped and stopped for good? Again, history is instructive. What history clearly demonstrates is that institutional racism and other forms of systemic violence, such as racial profiling and extrajudicial killings, are only curtailed when there are mass peoples' and social movements that challenge the structural and institutional foundations that rationalize and enable these repressive systems

"Unfortunately, police brutality and murder are nothing new to Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities, as the killings in Anaheim and Dallas clearly illustrate."

— Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

and policies with a broad range of strategies and tactics. As our report clearly illustrates, we are in desperate need of similar social movements now.

In the effort to help build these movements, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, is calling for a broad alliance of Blacks, Indigenous peoples, Latinos, Arabs, Asians, and progressive whites that will challenge the various forms of state repression, including racial profiling, extrajudicial killing, mass incarceration, mass deportation, economic exploitation and various forms of displacement. To give focus to this unity building effort and confront the structural and institutional foundations of racial discrimination, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement is demanding that the federal government institute and enforce a National Plan of Action for Racial Justice and Self-Determination that is produced by this social movement.

Organizations and individuals who share this vision are encouraged to read MXGM's report at <http://mxgm.org/report-on-the-extrajudicial-killings-of-110-black-people/> and join in the effort of organizing for and demanding a National Plan of Action for Racial Justice at <http://www.ushrnetwork.org/content/webform/trayvon-martin-petition>. To learn more about the "No More Trayvon Martins" Campaign initiated by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and how you or your organization can join and support the campaign, please contact Kamau Franklin at kamauadeabiodun@yahoo.com. ■

TUNISIA: Home to the Social Movements of the World!

By Maria Poblet



Photo: Maria Poblet. Preparatory Assembly for the World Social Forum Tunisia 2013

January 14, 2011, is a historic day in Tunisia: When the people ousted the 23-year dictatorship of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. That

struggle united many parts of society —old school nationalists who fought for Tunisia's independence from French colonialism; street vendors fed up with police harassment; garment workers who led strikes against their multi-national corporations bosses; youth who protested the more than 40% unemployment they faced, to families struggling to eat when austerity measures doubled the price of bread.

Many activists sacrificed their lives in the fight for democracy, killed at the hands of the military government. They all had one thing in common: they were sick of the dictatorship, and ready for power to be in

the hands of the people. Their bravery inspired mobilizations that toppled Egypt's 30-year dictatorship, and sparked uprisings throughout the region.

The Tunisian social movement is now strategizing about the transition: how to build more democracy, more rights? How to confront religious patriarchy, and ensure equal rights for women, as promised in their original constitution? How to respond to neoliberalism, and the constant pressure to become an economic colony of the global north?

This discussion led Tunisia movement organizations to step up as hosts of the 2013

World Social Forum, the largest civil society gathering of our time. As stated in their Charter Principles, it was an open meeting place for reflective thinking by groups and movements of civil society opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism...committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the Earth.

The Social Forum was built as a people's alternative to the World Economic Forum, a meeting of the world's 1% in Davos, Switzerland, where they advance the doctrine of neoliberalism

and "free trade" that causes cutbacks, crackdowns, and corporate power all over the world.

World Social Forum 2013 will convene in Tunisia's capital, Tunis, March 26-30, 2013. The local host committee is hard at work, meeting under banners that declare their vision: "Tunisia: Home to the World's Social Movements!" The forum promises to connect uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East to each other, and to movements across the world. It will also educate about people's struggles on the African continent. The Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, of which Causa Justa :: Just Cause is a proud member, is supporting these efforts, and will send a delegation to attend the forum.

With limited, biased news, most of us hardly know where Tunisia is; let alone how much their struggles are connected to ours, or what role the US plays in supporting dictators in the region. We have much to gain from being part of this historic gathering.

One of the many stories of the Tunisian uprising is of a group of hundreds of families who were promised affordable housing, and when the government didn't deliver they set up a tent camp in the Sahara Desert, which some nicknamed "Occupy the Sahara!"

WSF 2013 promises to be full of such inspiring stories, and will help build connections between otherwise isolated local fights towards a truly internationalist movement of the 99%. ■

We Love And Miss You Ms. Betty

We remember and salute one of our long-standing members, Ms. Betty Woodridge. Since she joined Causa Justa :: Just Cause during our fight against Wal-Mart in 2004, Ms. Betty has been a powerful spirit in the world and gave a tremendous amount of love and energy to the fight for housing justice.

A life long resident of Oakland and a well-known presence in West Oakland where she lived most of her life, she was well known for her passion and humor. Whether sitting on her porch, walking the Laney campus where she took classes, riding the bus or walking down San Pablo Avenue, she was always the first to shout out “Hey, baby! How you doin?” to folks passing by.

She was the first to get the dancing started at any party, as well as first to call out the shameless exploitation of slumlords and greedy developers. When Ms. Betty got on the bullhorn, she inspired the rest of us and scared those greedy bankers!



Photo: CJC Archives

She brought joy and humor to our struggle and was incredibly loved inside and outside of the organization.

She fought a long battle with heart disease and on July 10, 2012, she passed after suffering a stroke. Though we will miss her powerful agitation, crazy jokes, and her loving presence, we are proud to continue the fight for justice in her name and with her fierce spirit. ■

NOT ANOTHER SON

Lorenzo Lamar Ward

March 7, 1983~September 1, 2012



Photo Courtesy Princess Beverly Williams

Our hearts are heavy with the loss of Lorenzo. He was a lively spirit born to our beloved Princess Beverly. And he shouldn't have been Oakland's 81st homicide of the year. The blood of too many young people of color has flowed on our streets — breaking our hearts and devastating far too many families in our communities. In Lorenzo's memory we will organize for racial and economic justice and work to build a better world. ■

RISE: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

second rent increase of \$50 for the tenants to let go of their fear and ask for another arbitration at the rent board.

During the second arbitration their rent was stabilized to the legal amount and Flores' landlord had to return to him all the rent he had overcharged. After this decision Flores' landlord only heightened his harassment tactics to push the family out, including pulling out the stove and replacing it with three hot plates, stating that the stove was using too much energy. He refuses to make necessary repairs; he watches the family from a space between the wall in the garage; among other harassment tactics. The landlord has told the family multiple times that the house is his and he can do whatever he wants with it regardless of the laws.

With the rent reduction remedy gone from Prop M, tenants have once again found harassment difficult to fight. The only remedy is to suffer through the harassment to the point where

the tenant will suffer “actual” damages, such as doctor bills; loss of employment; psychiatric bills; etc. and then hire an attorney and sue. Many more renters cannot suffer through torment long enough and instead make the incredibly difficult decision to move.

Harassment makes people feel unsafe and scared in their own homes. Nevertheless, tenants in San Francisco are resilient and have always fought to be respected in this city. This fight is no different, SF tenants will continue to assert that everyone deserves safe, affordable, hassle free housing regardless of what their occupation is or how much money they make.

Winning the Hassle-Free Housing ordinance will not end the fight to stop displacement and pricing out of tenants from SF, but it will give tenants more tools to resolve their immediate issues so that they can be around to continue fighting for housing justice. They may own our home, but they do not own us! ■

ARTS & CULTURE

INTERVIEW WITH MICHELLE ALEXANDER, AUTHOR OF THE NEW JIM CROW:

Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

Juvenile Justice Information Exchange and Youth Today Washington, D.C. correspondent Kaukab Jhumra Smith covered a conference in July in Cincinnati sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund. Among the more than 3,000 people in attendance was legal scholar Michelle Alexander, author of The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. This reprint is courtesy of the Juvenile Justice Information Exchange.

Kaukab Jhumra Smith, Juvenile Justice Information Exchange (JJIE): What do you think is the civil rights issue of our day?

Michelle Alexander: I think the disposal of people who are viewed as “other,” defined along lines of race and class is a civil rights issue of the day. That expresses itself as mass incarceration, it expresses itself as mass deportations, it expresses itself through the caste-like system that has become our schools.

And so I think really the defining issue of our times is viewing people — poor people — as disposable. They can be locked up, locked out, thrown out of the country, relegated to inferior education, denied jobs. It's really viewing people defined largely by race and class, largely as disposable and unworthy of our care and concern.

JJIE: If you had a 30-second version of what people can do to counter what you have described as the spread of disenfranchisement laws, what would it be?

Alexander: I think there are a number of things we can do. The first in my view and the

most important is consciousness-raising and truth-telling. I think as a nation we have been lulled to sleep, to imagine that we have made great racial progress, that we're on the road to the Promised Land when in fact we've taken a tragic wrong turn.

So I think telling the truth, about how the system actually works, the harm it causes, who suffers, allowing those stories to be told, individual stories as well as the larger collective story. Consciousness-raising is critically important.

And then I think we have to build an underground railroad for people, people returning home from prison, people who are undocumented and struggling to find work and survive in this country, people who are struggling to survive in this era of mass incarceration, during this time when disposal of people has become commonplace.

And then we've also got to organize. We've got to organize for abolition of these systems, the system of mass incarceration, the war on drugs, calling for an end, once and for all, to the war on drugs. And so, in

my view, it's a combination of consciousness-raising, helping individuals in this time through underground-railroad activities and then really becoming serious about movement-building through organizing, at the community-based level as well as the national level.

JJIE: Why is it necessary to keep drawing upon analogies and parallels of the anti-slavery movement?

Alexander: I think it's critically important because people think that that's old news, that it's ancient history, and I think we have to be conscious of the ways in which the same kinds of attitudes that justified slavery, and that justified Jim Crow, are alive and well today.

The arguments that were made in support of slavery were that African-Americans were not just genetically inferior but were prone to violence, had to be made to work, were lazy. Those are the kinds of arguments that were made to support slavery. The same arguments were trotted out to support Jim Crow and today we have versions of those same



Art: phawker.com

arguments being made to support mass incarceration.

So when we demonize the other and imagine that there is something inherently inferior about them, it makes it easy for us to believe that “those people” aren't worthy of our care or concern. So I think we have to be conscious of the way that dynamic repeats itself. It repeats itself politically, it repeats itself socially, and if we become blind to the dynamic, or in denial about it, the chances are great that it will continue to repeat itself for a long time in the future. ■

DREAM: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

against another. Deferred Action provides no relief for undocumented youth with previous and/or current involvement in the criminal justice system, — which is ever-expanding and run on corporate greed —, nor does it offer relief to anyone over the age of 30 or youth who do not meet the education requirements. Because of these reasons, Deferred Action must not be perceived as the “cure-all” for all underlying causes of immigration injustice.

In the years that DREAMers have been organizing, our concerns

and goals have been clarified and widened. In lieu of institutional support DREAM activists, artists and professionals have created and sustained a system of support and infrastructure to answer our questions, point us towards resources and push each other to succeed.

It is from this experience, and the fact that not everyone's path looks like that of a DREAMer that came the understanding that a win for immigrant justice is bigger than DREAMers. And that it needs to be so in order to ensure that the DREAMer story and identity is

not used to further marginalize immigrants in our community whose lives do not fall within the DREAMer narrative.

Deferred Action is not the solution, *and* it is a huge victory that needs to be celebrated for the kind of win that it is. A large group of young undocumented people, a lot of them young women, across the nation standing their ground, strategically implementing direct action tactics and putting their bodies and futures on the line resulted in the President finally doing something.

This moment should be recognized for the type of movement builders that DREAMers are: skilled and passionate organizers who know how to navigate a complex fight with clear goals and effective tactics and will continue to do so.

Deferred Action is only part of the victory, how it came about and by and by whom is a part of this story that should not be overlooked. That — and that the fight is going to continue, because we dream big and our big win is still coming. ■

UNITY IS POWER // LA UNIÓN HACE LA FUERZA



Photo: Myles Boisen

ELECTIONS 2012

Causa Justa :: Just Cause State Wide Ballot Endorsements

Proposition 30
Temporary Taxes
to Fund Education.
Guaranteed Local
Public Safety Funding.
Initiative Constitutional
Amendment.

POSITION: YES

Prop 30 is the result of a historic compromise between the Restore California Coalition and Governor Jerry Brown, the governor had to negotiate directly with a coalition of community groups. This is a first step in our fight to amend Prop 13, approved in 1978 and which created tax loopholes allowing corporations to get away with not paying their fair share. Prop 30 temporarily increases taxes for those who earn over \$250,000 and raises sales tax by a quarter-cent. It is expected to raise \$6.8-\$9 billion in the first year, and \$5.4 billion to \$7.6 billion the following years. Income tax expires in 7 years, sales tax in four. Creates a protected education account, allocating 89% to K-12 and 11% to community colleges. 90% of the revenue comes from the top 1% and it brings desperately needed income to our schools, clinics, and other vital services.

SUPPORTERS:

AFSCME, CFT, CTA, CFA,CSEA, AFT, SEIU State Council, UDW, CA Labor Federation, University of California Regents,

Reclaim CA's Future, CA League of Women Voters, CA Democratic Party.

OPPONENTS:

Californians for Reforms and Jobs, Not Taxes Committee, The National Federation of Independent Business/ California, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, and the Small Business Action Committee.

Proposition 31
State Budget. State
and Local Government.
Initiative Constitutional
Amendment and Statute.

POSITION: NO

**For analysis and a list of opponents & supporters, please visit: www.cjjc.org*

Proposition 32
Prohibits Political
Contributions by Payroll
Deduction. Prohibitions

on Contributions to
Candidates. Initiative
Statute

POSITION: NO

Prop 32 is an attack on unions. It prohibits unions from using dues collected from payroll deductions for political purposes. It takes away the power of workers to impact state and local political fights and destroys a major part of the movement's fundraising infrastructure. Prop 32 restricts unions and some corps. from making contributions to candidates; but offers quite a giveaway to several types of corps like Sole Proprietorships, Real Estate Investment Trusts, LLCs, LLPs, who are exempted from these restrictions and will still be able to contribute unlimited amounts to campaigns. Plus, no there are NO restrictions on contributions from secret donors or PACs. Corporations shouldn't be able to put money into politics if Unions can't. Enforcing this will cost several hundred thousand dollars annually with some of the cost being offset by payments of fines.

SUPPORTERS:

Howard Jarvis Tax payer Association, Nat'l Federation of Independent Business/ California, Gloria Romero, Charles Munger, Thomas Siebel.

OPPONENTS:

CA Common Cause, League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, CA Democratic Party, CA Labor Federation, CTA, CSEA, SEIU State Council, SEIU Local 1000, Firefighters.

Proposition 33
Changes Law to
Allow Auto Insurance
Companies to Set Prices
Based on a Driver's
History of Insurance
Coverage. Initiative
Statute

POSITION: NO

**For analysis and a list of opponents & supporters, please visit: www.cjjc.org*

Proposition 34
Death Penalty Repeal.
Initiative Statute.
Recommendation: YES

Prop 34 would finally put an end to the death penalty in California. People who had already been sentenced to death, will have their sentences

replaced with life sentences without the possibility of parole. Prop 34 requires people found guilty of murder to work while in prison, and their wages would go towards victims as reparations. It creates a \$100 million fund to help solve murder and rape cases. The State and counties could save tens of millions of dollars annually.

SUPPORTERS:

ACLU of CA, Amnesty International, CA Democratic Party, Catholic Bishops of California, California NAACP, California

League of Women Voters, CA Labor Federation, SAFE CA.

Opponents: Peace Officers Assoc., Sacramento County Deputy Sheriff's Assoc., Sacramento Police Officers Assoc.

Proposition 35
Human Trafficking
Penalties, Sex Offender
Registration Initiative
Statute

POSITION: NO

Prop 35 claims to help victims of human trafficking and the sexually exploited but it really does neither and will result in the further criminalization of immigrants and communities of color. This law doesn't address the economic crisis and cuts to welfare, housing and other resources which are forcing increasing numbers of young people, particularly young mothers, into the sex industry to survive., nor does it help young people get out of prostitution or escape from exploitation and violence. Trafficking is not about prostitution but about poverty, immigration and asylum. Existing laws cover all these crimes that qualify as Human Trafficking (e.g. forced labor, abduction and rape) and could be used to prosecute the assailants of women and children, whatever work they are being forced into.

SUPPORTERS:

Chris Kelly (contributed \$1,860,000), Peace Officers Association, Women's Foundation, Planned Parenthood, NOW, Crime Victims United of California, Californians Against Slavery. CA Democratic Party, CA Labor Federation.

OPPONENTS:

Global Women's Strike, The International Prostitutes Collective

Proposition 36
Three Strikes Law.
Sentencing for Repeat
Felony Offenders.
Initiative Statute.

POSITION: YES

Prop 36 changes California's racist three strikes law by removing life sentencing if the third strike wasn't serious or violent. People who are already serving life sentences because of a third strike could be released or given a lighter sentence with a judge's approval. Life sentences would still apply if previous convictions were for rape, murder, or child molestation. This could save the state up to \$100 million a year in prison and parole expenses.

SUPPORTERS:

Stanford University Professor David Mills, George Soros, NAACP, CA Democratic Party, CA Labor Federation

OPPONENTS:

Mike Reynolds (wrote the language for California's "Three Strikes" Law).

Proposition 37
Genetically Engineered
Foods. Mandatory
Labeling. Initiative
Statute.

POSITION: YES

**For analysis and a list of opponents & supporters, please visit: www.cjjc.org*

Proposition 38
Tax for Education
and Early Childhood
Programs. Initiative
Statute.

POSITION: NO

**For analysis and a list of opponents & supporters, please visit: www.cjjc.org*

Proposition 39
Tax Treatment for Multi-
state Businesses. Clean
Energy and Energy
Efficiency Funding.
Initiative Statute.

RECOMMENDATION: YES

**For analysis and a list of opponents & supporters, please visit: www.cjjc.org* ■

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

DATES TO REMEMBER

- <http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/>
- October 22, 2012
Last day to register to vote
 - October 30, 2012
Last day to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot by mail
 - November 6, 2012
Election Day
Polls are open 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

VOTER ASSISTANCE HOTLINES

The Secretary of State's office provides voting-related materials and assistance in ten languages.

For answers to your questions about voting and elections, or to request mail delivery of a voter registration form, vote-by-mail application, the Official Voter Information Guide

www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov

or A Guide to Voting In California in any of these languages, please call one of the toll-free Voter Assistance Hotlines shown below.

English
(800) 345-VOTE (8683)

Español / Spanish
(800) 232-VOTA (8682)

中文 / Chinese
(800) 339-2857

हिन्दी / Hindi
(888) 345-2692

日本語 / Japanese
(800) 339-2865

한국어 / Korean
(866) 575-1558

Tagalog
(800) 339-2957

ภาษาไทย / Thai
(855) 345-3933

Việt ngữ / Vietnamese
(800) 339-8163

TTY/TDD
(800) 833-8683

Find your polling place by calling or visiting:

ALAMEDA

1225 Fallon Street, Room G-1
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 272-6933

https://www.acgov.org/alco_ssl_app/rov/voter_info/voter_profile.jsp?formLanguage=E

SAN FRANCISCO

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place, Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-4375

<http://www.smartvoter.org/2012/06/05/ca/sf/>

AM I ALREADY REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Visit the website listed below or call:

Alameda County:
510-272-6933
Spanish line: 510-(TK)
https://www.acgov.org/alco_ssl_app/rov/voter_info/voter_profile.jsp?formLanguage=E

San Francisco County
415-554-4375
Spanish line is 415-554-4366
<http://www.sfelections.org/VoterRegStatus/index.html>

WHERE CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE?

You may submit your voter registration application through the Secretary of State's website. <https://rtv.sos.ca.gov/elections/register-to-vote/>

You can also pick up an application at your county elections office, any Department of Motor Vehicles office, and many post offices, public libraries, and government offices. To have a paper application mailed to you call your county elections office or the Secretary of State's toll-free voter hotline at (800) 345-VOTE.

Oakland City Council Candidates Q&A for Districts 3 & 5 and At-Large

Causa Justa :: Just Cause invited all the candidates for Oakland City Council in Districts 3, 5 and at-large to respond to three questions. Here are the answers from those who responded.

Oakland’s Just Cause eviction ordinance, Measure EE was passed 10 years ago by voters and applies to properties built before 1980. Would you support the expansion of the existing Just Cause Eviction protection to include making it apply to homeowners in foreclosure?

DERRICK MUHAMMAD, D-3

Yes. I actually support a moratorium on foreclosures in the city of Oakland) removing the clause that limits the properties it applies to and removing the owner exemption in multi-unit properties? (No)

ALEX MILLER-COLE, D-3

While I am a landlord, I strongly support tenants’ rights. I have been a property owner in Oakland for the past 16 years. My tenants are my neighbors and my friends. Some of my best endorsements come from our tenants. I have never once evicted or taken legal action against a single one. I would support the expansion of the existing Just Cause protections. I am the only candidate running for District 3 who publicly supported Measure I, a parcel tax that would have directly affected me. Even though it has cost me endorsements, I am proud to have advocated for additional funds for our libraries, police and city services in general. It is time we elect hardworking citizens instead of career politicians.

LYNETTE GIBSON MCELHANEY, D-3

I fundamentally believe that the Just Cause Eviction protection must continue to fairly support and protect renters, as they are often among our lower income populations. I believe that our housing laws must support both tenants and owners who are in foreclosures, because of the serious economic impacts foreclosures have on our entire community. In order to make the best decision for Oakland residents, I would need to see more specific plans defining the changes to the Just Cause ordinance.

SEAN SULLIVAN, D-3

Yes, I am in favor of exploring every avenue we can to support homeowners in foreclosure and keep more people in their homes, including expanding Measure EE’s Just Cause Eviction protections. I have watched in horror how former Covenant House clients and neighbors have become homeless once again through their rentals being foreclosed upon or short sold. There are strategies that other cities and non-profits are utilizing to keep people in their homes that I want to champion in Oakland as well. We should use every method available to us to keep renters in their homes despite the financial performance of their landlords. As a member of Community Action Partnership, I advocated for the funding of Housing and Economic Rights Advocates (HERA) and Bay Area Legal Aid so that tenants and low-income homeowners knew their rights in these situations.

MARIO JUAREZ, D-5

A healthy city must have a viable homeowner base and an equally strong and sustainable renter base. I believe that the San Francisco model is a valuable one to study

and possibly follow. Clearly, Oakland’s Just Cause eviction ordinance should apply to owners losing their homes in foreclosure. To be fair and equitable to renters and owners as well, the exemption for properties built after 1980 should be removed, in part because renters deserve real protections irrespective of when a property was built. Further, again with fairness and equity in mind, the Just Cause ordinance should also apply to single-unit rental properties.

NOEL GALLO, D-5

I support the expansion of Measure EE to include properties built up to 1990 and that protection for tenants, especially with families need to be protected.

REBECCA D. KAPLAN, AT-LARGE

Oakland was one of the first cities to notice the negative impacts of predatory lending and resulting foreclosures, and we continue to suffer disproportionate impacts of this crisis. In 2002, I worked together with Just Cause and others to pass Measure EE – and we succeeded despite being heavily outspent. With the massive foreclosure crisis causing vast new harms to our community, I do believe that we can and should adopt legal expansions to more fully deal with and restrict post-foreclosure evictions – both for people who had been living in those properties as tenants and homeowners alike, who have now become “tenants” of the banks. I would certainly work towards obtaining the needed votes on the Council to move this forward. Further, I would be interested in collaborating with you to stop allowing foreclosures unless the bank can prove they own the note – which would help prevent post-foreclosure displacement.

The City of Oakland is rated among the worst in habitable housing and city staff are currently working to revamp the code enforcement program. Do you support funding the city of Oakland’s relocation ordinance for families that are displaced by habitability issues?

DERRICK MUHAMMAD, D-3

Yes. If sources of revenue are available. In the event the landlord doesn’t pay.

ALEX MILLER-COLE, D-3

The City of Oakland is rated among the worst in habitable housing and city staff is currently working to revamp the code enforcement program. Do you support funding the city of Oakland’s relocation ordinance for families that are displaced by habitability issues?

LYNETTE GIBSON MCELHANEY, D-3

Yes, as a Director of a housing non-profit, I am well aware of the code violations that exist within our community. Even out on the campaign trail, I have walked up steps and stood on porches that are not safe and are not up to building codes. I strongly support the City in its efforts to revamp code enforcement to ensure that our residents are safe. I believe that when homes are in need of major improvements (which would cause the family to be displaced) that there must be a relocation

ordinance to ensure the safety and stable housing of those residents. This ordinance is fair for renters and it sets clear expectations for landlords about treating their tenants with respect by ensuring that their living conditions are safe and secure.

SEAN SULLIVAN, D-3

Yes. We must crack down on absentee landlords who are negligent and do more do recover the relocation costs from these slumlords. Too many families are living in unsafe conditions and deserve better.

MARIO JUAREZ, D-5

Whether a property owner independently decides to address habitability issues or such action is required by the city, renters in good standing should not be penalized because a landlord has not properly maintained a building. I support a program that would provide relocation funding directly to affected families. Such relocation could be supported through construction permit fees paid by property owners, or in exchange for a permit fee waiver, an owner and tenant could enter into a relocation agreement directly with each other and file that agreement with the City.

NOEL GALLO, D-5

Yes! Much of Oakland’s affordable housing stock is older and in neighborhoods with a mix of land uses. The City of Oakland, from a community and economic development responsibility, must seek funding or creative property owner financing to renovate or reinvest in Oakland’s deteriorating housing stock. To do this properly, we need to provide housing for those whom are being temporarily displaced as a result of dangerous living conditions. This can only be done by creatively funding the relocation fund.

REBECCA D. KAPLAN, AT-LARGE

It has been important for the City of Oakland to reform its code enforcement department to ensure that we are penalizing serious offenders of blight and habitability violations that endanger their tenants – without unfairly fining families working to upkeep their own homes. Habitability of housing is key for a number of reasons – including crime prevention and ensuring that our residents have safe and healthy living conditions regardless of economic status. I authored and passed city policy directing city administrators to fine banks (or other corporate owners of property) per day for every property they control that is blighted. By targeting the major culprits of these violations – slumlords and banks who foreclose on families only to let the properties become rundown eyesores and crime magnets – we can hold responsible, including financially responsible, those who have caused the most harm to people in our community while simultaneously discouraging habitability violations and foreclosures.

What steps would you take to ensure that we are protecting our residents from the devastating impacts of the so-called “secure communities” federal program?

DERRICK MUHAMMAD, D-3

This program relies on local law enforcement agencies working in

partnership with ICE. I would not support it because it is being misused as a general deportation tool, which is disruptive to the local social fabric.

ALEX MILLER-COLE, D-3

While all of my answers to Oakland policy questions come from my professional and on-the-ground community work, this question in particular is more of a personal one for me: After my father’s sudden death when I was 17, it fell to me to provide for my mother and five siblings. I was forced to migrate from Guadalajara, Mexico to this country, where I have made a life for myself - I spent more than a decade as an undocumented immigrant in the U.S., taught myself English, survived a 4-year deportation proceeding, and only became a citizen on May 9th of this year. I know firsthand the effects of harsh immigration policies on families. I am strongly against these deceptively named “safety/security” a program. I will actively support any measure that will help keep families together and our undocumented residents working and contributing to Oakland’s civic, economic and cultural life.

LYNETTE GIBSON MCELHANEY, D-3

The Secure Communities program was intended to detain undocumented persons who have violent or serious criminal records. However, the implementation of Secure Communities has been distorted and thus law enforcement personnel have been detaining and innocent Californians. I will support the needs of Oaklanders, especially those with families and children, while abiding by the laws of our state and our country.

SEAN SULLIVAN, D-3

I support Oakland opting out of this horrific deportation program that starts in our county jails and separates thousands of parents from their children, and I join the call on President Obama to end this program immediately.

MARIO JUAREZ, D-5

I vehemently oppose the federal “secure communities” program because it makes many members of our communities anything but secure. This issue requires strong and urgent advocacy to avoid heart-breaking separation of families. As a member of the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee, I supported efforts and a resolution to make this horrible program a thing of the past in California. As an Oakland City Council member I cannot control the federal government, but will do all in my power to restrain our local law enforcement from ever having a hand in enforcing this devastating program.

NOEL GALLO, D-5

I have represented and supported any measure that will help keep families together. I introduced a resolution to prohibit US Immigration Services on and around the Oakland Unified School District 95school campuses. I am supportive of the Dream Act and the Deferred Action Program.

SF City Council Candidates Avalos and Campos Q&A

Causa Justa :: Just Causes asked Candidates from Dist. 9 and 11 to respond to the following questions. They are the only candidates running in their district. Here’s what they had to say.

Share some concrete actions you would take to ensure that Latinos, Blacks and all low-income tenants have access to dignified and affordable housing in San Francisco?

DAVID CAMPOS, DIST. 9

Since my election to the Board of Supervisors four years ago, I have worked hard to ensure the creation of affordable housing at all income levels, including housing for low-income individuals. Given the disparate impact that the lack of affordable housing can have on some communities, including the Latino and African-American communities, I recognize the critical need of addressing this issue. Among other things, we have promoted and approved individual projects that ensure the creation of affordable housing at all income levels. Moreover, we have worked hard to create a separate and independent source of funding for affordable housing, as we know that the free market alone cannot address this issue. This is why I voted for and am supporting the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which creates up to \$50 million a year for the purpose of making San Francisco more affordable to low-income and middle-income families. I have also supported an increase to the property transfer tax for luxury properties, which has brought in additional funding into the general fund. I pledge to continue to work closely with affordable housing advocates and members of all diverse communities to make sure that San Francisco remains affordable for all families who want to live here.

JOHN AVALOS, D-11

I will be campaigning in favor of the Housing Trust Fund. I worked to ensure that it benefited homeowners in need of financial support for mortgage relief and renovating deteriorating structures. I will help in the creation and implementation of its programming and will work to ensure that it significantly benefits communities of color. I will do everything in my power to protect and expand the rights of tenants. Too many of our families have been displaced, or have needed to double or triple up in inadequate spaces to afford the high rents of San Francisco. In order to support tenants to stay in their homes and help homeowners to pay for their mortgages, I will work to safeguard current in-law units and bring them up to code.

What steps would you take to ensure that we are protecting our residents from the devastating impacts of the so-called “secured communities” federal programs?

DAVID CAMPOS, DIST. 9

I am proud of my record against the so-called “secured communities” program. We at the Board of Supervisors have made our position very clear, through the passage of resolutions that I have authored or co-sponsored—we don’t believe that local law enforcement should be in the business of enforcing immigration law. The focus of local law enforcement should be the safety of our communities, prioritizing dealing with and preventing violent crime. Immigration law is not the purview of local law enforcement. In addition to this effort, I have supported other local and state efforts to allow local jurisdictions, such as San Francisco, the ability to choose not to participate in the program. Going forward, I will continue to advocate against “secured communities,” which actually makes our communities less safe because it undermines the trust that local communities have in local law enforcement. I continue to speak out against efforts of the Obama administration to continue with this ill-conceived and counterproductive program.

JOHN AVALOS, D-11

In general, the “secure communities” program is bad policy that should be repealed immediately. I support the Trust Act, and hope that Governor Brown will hear the pleas of our communities and sign it in to law. It will go a long way in ensuring that immigrant communities will not be afraid to contact law enforcement and other city agencies when in need of their assistance. Our city’s status as a Sanctuary City is vitally important in ensuring that San Francisco remain a city for all regardless of who you are or where you have come from. Reporting our fellow residents to ICE, flies in the face of those values.

It has been demonstrated again and again that the vast majority of people who have been deported through this program have had no charges filed against them, nor have they had a criminal record. The impact on our communities had been devastating. Families are torn apart, and money is diverted away from the resources and services that our communities need to thrive. As a Supervisor, I will continue to lead on issues impacting immigrant communities, and ensure that all of our communities receive their fair share of resource and services. ■

REBECCA D. KAPLAN, AT-LARGE

I strongly oppose S-Comm – I’ve written and signed letters to Legislators to oppose this horrific and prejudicial policy that not only encourages discrimination, but makes all of us less safe. When anyone in our city is taught to systematically fear law enforcement, real crimes go unsolved – witnesses to violent crimes become afraid to report what they have seen. Wasting law enforcement resources pursuing people who are not a threat

– people who are only targeted based on their national origin – is inexcusable, especially while illegal gun dealers and other dangerous criminals go unprosecuted due to “lack of enforcement resources.” The ridiculously named “secure communities” program is wasteful, prejudicial and is detrimental to real security. Or, as the book of Exodus puts it: “Do not oppress the immigrant, for you know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” ■