



PROTECTING TENANTS AND STRENGTHENING HOUSING STABILITY

I know what it's like to be a renter because I was one for most of my adult life. From the age of 19 until 43, I lived in apartments throughout Los Angeles, including West Los Angeles, Palms, and Downtown Los Angeles, before eventually purchasing a home in Baldwin Hills. For 21 of those years, I shared housing with a roommate because, like many Angelenos, homeownership remained financially out of reach.

I understand firsthand the challenges renters face because I lived them. I budgeted around rent, managed rising housing costs, and relied on landlords to maintain safe and habitable living conditions. I also recognize that for many Angelenos, renting is not a temporary phase. It is how they raise families, build careers, and establish lasting roots in their communities.

Tenants deserve safe housing, fair treatment, and meaningful legal protections. No one should face harassment, illegal eviction, unsafe living conditions, discrimination, or unlawful fees. At the same time, responsible property owners deserve clear rules, consistent enforcement, and a legal system that operates efficiently, fairly, and predictably.

For nearly three decades, I have built my career on enforcing the law, protecting victims, and holding wrongdoers accountable. As Bureau Director of Specialized Prosecutions, I lead more than 300 attorneys and professional staff responsible for some of the most complex cases in Los Angeles County. That experience has reinforced a simple truth: laws only protect people when they are enforced, and government best serves vulnerable communities when it acts with competence, responsiveness, and accountability.

As City Attorney, I will work closely with the Housing Department, community organizations, neighborhood stakeholders, and responsible property owners to ensure that tenant protection laws deliver real results. I will focus on enforcing existing laws, addressing serious violations, protecting housing stability, and ensuring that both tenants and landlords are treated fairly under the law.

This Tenant Protection Plan is designed to achieve those goals.

Sincerely,

John McKinney

1. Strengthen Enforcement of Existing Tenant Protection Laws

Los Angeles has some of the strongest tenant protection laws in the nation. The issue is not a lack of legal authority – it is the consistent and effective enforcement of those laws. The City Attorney's Office holds robust civil enforcement authority under:

- California's Unfair Competition Law (Business and Professions Code § 17200 et seq.)
- Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance (LAMC Chapter XV)
- Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (LAMC § 45.33)
- California Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (AB 1482)
- California Civil Code habitability protections
- California anti-price gouging laws (Penal Code § 396)

As City Attorney, I will actively deploy these tools to hold accountable landlords who:

- Repeatedly violate habitability standards violations
- Carry out illegal evictions
- Harass tenants
- Impose fraudulent rent increases
- Engage in price gouging during declared emergencies
- Use deceptive or unlawful fee practices
- Retaliate against tenants who exercise legal rights

I will focus enforcement resources on serious and repeat offenders while encouraging voluntary compliance among responsible property owners.

2. Partner With the Housing Department to Improve Compliance

The Los Angeles Housing Department serves as the City's primary administrative agency responsible for:

- Rent Stabilization Ordinance administration
- Housing inspections
- Habitability enforcement
- Tenant complaint intake
- Relocation assistance oversight
- Rental unit registration

The City Attorney's Office will not duplicate these functions. Instead, it will operate as a strategic legal partner that strengthens enforcement outcomes.

- I will establish formal coordination protocols with the Housing Department to:
- Identify repeat violators
- Prioritize the most serious cases for legal action
- Improve information sharing
- Track compliance outcomes
- Reduce delays between administrative findings and enforcement actions

Effective government requires coordination, not silos.

3. Combat Slumlords and Chronic Habitability Violations

Every tenant deserves safe and habitable housing. California law requires landlords to maintain rental units fit for human occupancy. Habitability failures can include:

- Lack of heat or hot water
- Significant plumbing failures
- Electrical hazards
- Pest infestations
- Mold and water intrusion
- Structural dangers
- Unsafe common areas

The City Attorney's Office will concentrate enforcement actions seeking court-ordered repairs, civil penalties, restitution where authorized, ongoing compliance monitoring, and injunctive relief.

The goal is not punishment alone – it is bringing properties into compliance and protecting tenant safety.



4. Enforce Anti-Harassment and Anti-Retaliation Protections

Tenants must be able to exercise their legal rights without intimidation or harassment.

Los Angeles' Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance prohibits conduct including:

- Threats and coercion
- Repeated unlawful entry
- Refusal to perform necessary repairs
- Retaliation for tenant complaints
- Misrepresentations concerning tenant rights
- Interference with tenant organizing activities

Particular attention should be paid to conduct intended to force tenants from rent-stabilized units through pressure rather than lawful procedures.

I will prioritize enforcement against conduct designed to force tenants out of rent-stabilized units through pressure rather than lawful procedures, and I will ensure that serious and repeated violations are investigated and pursued through civil enforcement when appropriate.

5. Protect Tenants During Emergencies

Emergencies often create opportunities for unlawful conduct.

California Penal Code § 396 generally prohibits rent increases exceeding 10 percent during declared emergencies. The City Attorney's Office will actively monitor and investigate unlawful price gouging following:

- Wildfires
- Earthquakes
- Public health emergencies
- Other declared disasters

Families displaced by emergencies must never be exploited.

6. Address Unlawful Fees and Deceptive Practices

Housing affordability depends on more than base rent – it includes the full range of costs imposed on tenants.

Where authorized by law, the City Attorney's Office will should investigate deceptive practices involving:

- Improperly withheld security deposits
- Misleading fee disclosures
- Unlawful application fees
- Fraudulent charges
- Consumer protection violations affecting tenants

Fair enforcement supports responsible landlords by preventing unlawful practices from distorting the market.

7. Community Engagement and Public Education

Effective enforcement begins with awareness.

As City Attorney, I will support:

- Tenant rights educational workshops
- Landlord compliance education
- Partnerships with community organizations
- Collaboration with neighborhood councils
- Public outreach regarding major changes in housing laws

Education reduces disputes and prevents violations before they require litigation.

8. Fairness for Responsible Landlords

Strong tenant protections require balance. Most landlords comply with the law and work hard to maintain their properties.

I will promote consistent enforcement standards and on serious and repeated violations rather than creating unnecessary burdens for responsible housing providers.

I support:

- Consistent enforcement standards
- Clear compliance guidance
- Early dispute resolution where appropriate
- Transparency in enforcement decisions
- Due process for all parties

A fair system protects tenants while respecting responsible property owners.

9. Accountability and Results

Public trust depends on measurable results.

I will publish annual enforcement metrics tracking:

- Enforcement actions filed
- Cases resolved
- Restitution recovered
- Habitability violations corrected
- Anti-harassment actions pursued
- Compliance rates among repeat offenders

Taxpayers and tenants deserve clear evidence that enforcement efforts deliver results.

Housing stability underpins strong neighborhoods, thriving businesses, and healthy communities.

As Los Angeles City Attorney, I will focus on the core mission of the office; enforcing the law fairly, protecting tenants from unlawful conduct, holding serious violators accountable, supporting responsible property owners, and ensuring that the protections adopted by the City and State translate into real-world outcomes.



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www.McKinney4LA.com**