

Group Home Ordinance Update

Los Angeles County Sober Living Coalition



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Sober Living Network

LA City Council Orders Ordinance Drafted

Community Care Facilities Proposed Ordinance

On Wednesday, June 1st, the City Council directed the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to address problem group homes and regulate licensed treatment centers with land use restrictions.

The [proposed law](#), as written, would make it illegal to have more than one rental agreement or lease in any single family home. Treatment centers would be limited to two people per bedroom.

Although the motion did pass, this was the best hearing for sober living homes to date. Thanks to the hard work of the Coalition, a “who’s who” of civil and disability rights groups showed up to explain it was wrong.

Councilmember Alarcon [advocated](#) our position from the Council floor. (See section on Alarcon)



The Deputy City Attorney was embarrassed when her coworkers from the LA Housing Department section testified they had seen the proposal for the first time that same day. The Housing Department lawyers oversee the City’s compliance with Federal Fair Housing Laws. The ACLU came out against the law officially for the first time. Testimony in opposition

from the President of Laborers Local 300, who is affiliated with Victory Outreach, attracted special attention of the Council members.

Kim Savage, a longtime fair housing legal expert testified against the law. Those opposing the law outnumbered supporters 3 to one. Future hearings will require a strong presence of individual Coalition members.

What you can do today to help defeat this law

Now is the time for action.

Councilmembers now know this is an important issue in our communities and they are listening. This law affects not only sober living homes and treatment centers, but

every single family home in Los Angeles. Students, seniors and any shared living arrangement are affected. Discuss this with everybody you know and explain government is seeking the right to

intrude into our daily lives by knocking on the door and demanding to see rental agreements to determine our private rent sharing financial agreements. (See Pg. 4 for council contacts)





"The Fair Housing Act and the ADA ensure that persons with disabilities, including those recovering from addiction, can live in a community of their choosing free from discrimination"

"The Justice Department will continue its vigorous enforcement of federal laws to protect the civil rights of persons with disabilities across the country."

- Thomas E. Perez,
Assistant Attorney
General for the Civil
Rights Division US
Dept. of Justice



Los Angeles is Ignoring the Fair Housing Act

Since 1988 the US Fair Housing Act has protected people in recovery from housing discrimination.

Many California State laws provide similar safe guards against housing discrimination.

Municipal governments have been seeking ways around this law to push group homes into certain areas across the nation, violating fair housing law.

Federal Courts have been mostly supportive of the FHA but only after cities pass discriminatory laws.

Los Angeles is trying to find creative ways to enact zoning laws. The City Attorney in charge of this proposed ordinance said it is legally defensible even though dozens of experts have repeatedly explained the many violations of law.

One Councilmember said

no matter how they act somebody will end up suing the City, suggesting the City is destined to be a "test case" for municipal regulation of group homes despite certain lawsuits.

Housing providers cannot simply rely on the Fair Housing Act to defeat this proposal. Grassroots advocacy is necessary to spread the word and influence political leaders to vote against this law.

Council Vote and Amending Motions

The [original motion](#) was to approve the Planning and Land Use Committee report and to instruct the City Attorney to draft a final ordinance for review. That passed twelve to 1 with Alarcon dissenting.

Councilman Rosendahl made an amending [motion](#) for enforcement guidelines to be reviewed. This amendment passed.

Councilmembers Parks

and Smith [motioned](#) for a report on how to expand regulation to all areas above single family zones. This amendment passed.

Two other motions were not recorded nor voted on. Councilman Reyes made a motion seeking approval of the final draft by the Housing Department & Homeless Services Authority before Council consideration. Rosendahl

motioned to make sure City funding for housing (including veterans) would not be affected by the law.

Although not officially voted on or recorded, these concerns should be addressed by the City Attorney in the next draft.

The Coalition will remind drafters of the law of these Council concerns and we believe the next report will address these motions.

Thank You Councilmember Richard Alarcon!

Richard Alarcon supports our effort to defeat the law and invited the ACLU and many powerful supporters to the table to help us win.

Going head to head with Councilman Smith, he took a bold step against this attack on recovery.

The City Council typically votes unanimously on most issues leaving us to question democracy.

It is not popular amongst voters to support drug addicts and alcoholics, even if they decided to stop and get some help.

Nuisance abatement is the solution to problem properties in Los Angeles. Councilman Alarcon is a champion of civil rights, fair housing and disabled people, including sober living homes. We all owe him a big THANK YOU!

Single Lease Requirement is Not a Solution

The proposed ordinance redefines the term family and adds a definition of "single housekeeping unit" making every single family home in Los Angeles an illegal boarding house if there is more than one lease or rental agreement.

The Sober Living Coalition and the Sober Living Network are working with knowledgeable attorneys to draft a complicated single lease that will

facially comply with the proposed ordinance should it pass as written. Details and training will be provided when necessary.

This is an attempt to find a way around the Fair Housing Act limitations on local regulation of group homes and includes provisions ([deemed illegal and unenforceable previously](#)) that would adversely affect millions in supportive housing funds.

Examples were given at the last hearing proving a single lease requirement will do absolutely nothing to address problem sober living homes but will hurt all shared housing.

City Planners stated if there were 70 people in one home and they were all on a single lease, this ordinance would allow them to live in any zone legally. Obviously, this cannot address problems.



Licensed Treatment Centers Caught in Witch Hunt

The witch hunt against bad sober living homes is truly an attack on recovery and provisions making it financially impossible for most licensed treatment centers to continue saving lives are included in the proposed ordinance.

There is no evidence that treatment centers caused any problems requiring intervention in our City. Caught in the witch hunt, state licensed providers

would be limited to "two people per bedroom" and mandated to provide parking spaces for people who do not have vehicles.

Tarzana Treatment Center and a few other programs have worked hard fighting these provisions, but there are hundreds missing the opportunity to advocate for their survival.

Limiting treatment centers to "two per bedroom" not

only makes it hard to break even, it makes it dangerous for initial recovery because we need more close support in initial recovery stages.

Contact counselors and treatment centers to let them know about this law and ask them to become involved in the process.

This is an attack on all of us in recovery, not just sober living homes.



Power in Numbers – Take Action Today

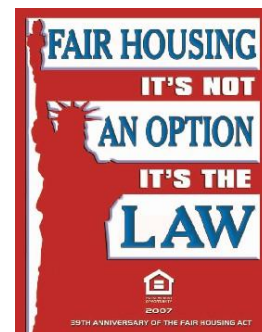
Neighborhood groups have organized well and are supporting this law.

Neighborhood Councils and Homeowner Groups have written in record numbers supporting this Community Care Facilities Proposed Ordinance.

Many of these groups did not know details of the ordinance and were given misinformation. However, they nonetheless wrote to the City Councilmembers expressing support. Most addicts and alcoholics are not interested in politics; we are seeking recovery.

More important than the details of single leases and occupancy standards is the number of people on each side of the issue.

Get everyone you know to send an email, write a letter, call or visit Council Members to defeat this discriminatory proposal.





CALL, WRITE, EMAIL - WE'RE LISTENING

Call, write, email or visit your Councilmembers today and tell them you strongly **OPPOSE** the Community Care Facilities Proposed Ordinance

Los Angeles City Hall 200 N. Spring St. 4th Fl. Los Angeles CA 90012

CD 1	- Honorable Ed Reyes	(213) 473-7001	Councilmember.Reyes@lacity.org
CD 2	- Honorable Paul Krekorian	473-7002	Councilmember.Krekorian@lacity.org
CD 3	- Honorable Dennis P. Zine	473-7003	Councilmember.Zine@lacity.org
CD 4	- Honorable Tom LaBonge	473-7004	Councilmember.LaBonge@lacity.org
CD 5	- Honorable Paul Koretz	473-7005	Councilmember.Koretz@lacity.org
CD 6	- Honorable Tony Cardenas	473-7006	Councilmember.Cadenas@lacity.org
CD 7	- Honorable Richard Alarcon	473-7007	Councilmember.Alarcon@lacity.org
CD 8	- Honorable Bernard Parks	473-7008	Councilmember.Parks@lacity.org
CD 9	- Honorable Jan Perry	473-7009	Councilmember.Perry@lacity.org
CD 10	- Honorable Herb J. Wesson	473-7010	Councilmember.Wesson@lacity.org
CD 11	- Honorable Bill Rosendahl	473-7011	Councilmember.Rosendahl@lacity.org
CD 12	- Honorable Greig Smith	473-7012	Councilmember.Smith@lacity.org
CD 13	- Honorable Eric Garcetti	473-7013	Councilmember.Garcetti@lacity.org
CD 14	- Honorable Jose Huizar	473-7014	Councilmember.Huizar@lacity.org
CD 15	- Honorable Janice Hahn	473-7015	Councilmember.Hahn@lacity.org

Please forward after sending a copy of letters or emails to us at jeffc@lacscl.org

The Sober Living Network is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting excellence in the operation and management of sober living and other community recovery support resources.

Phone (310) 396-5270
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 Project Director
jeffc@lacscl.org



The Sober Living Network
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 Santa Monica CA 90409
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Traditionally many of our members do not regularly attend all chapter and county coalition meetings consistently. Now more than ever it is critical suit up and show up on time.

The San Fernando Valley meets monthly and other chapters are increasing the frequency of chapter meetings. Stay involved.

The Legal Defense Fund contributions are coming in slow - we need money from every member home to successfully advocate for you and make sure we are ready for a court battle when necessary. Send your check today.

Check the City Clerk website www.lacity.org and click on "Council File Management System" and input council file number [11-0262](tel:11-0262) to keep up to date. Be sure to read the numerous public comments scanned in to better understand all sides of this issue. Discriminatory intent may be found in council file number [07-3427](tel:07-3427).

The Sober Living Coalition will be posting updates online at www.soberhousing.net See the **Housing Rights** page for background information.

Attend Coalition Meetings & Council Hearings

Council Meeting Video

Available online at www.lacity.org

Click on link to

LACityClerk Connect
 (Live or On-Demand)

City Council
LIVE and ON-DEMAND
 Video

Scroll down and click

6/1/2011 Video
 Agenda Item #12