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Agenda Date: 4/8/2021
Council Meeting

2021 APR -6 A 11:00

CITY OF FRESNO
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

FRESNO CITY COUNCIL



Information Packet

ITEM(S)

File ID 21-504 (4-B)

RESOLUTION - Creating the Rental Mediation Program

Contents of Supplement: eComments.

Item(s)

Supplemental Information:

Any agenda related public documents received and distributed to a majority of the City Council after the Agenda Packet is printed are included in Supplemental Packets. Supplemental Packets are produced as needed. The Supplemental Packet is available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office, 2600 Fresno Street, during normal business hours (main location pursuant to the Brown Act, G.C. 54957.5(2)). In addition, Supplemental Packets are available for public review at the City Council meeting in the City Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street. Supplemental Packets are also available on-line on the City Clerk's website.

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City Council on 2021-04-08 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

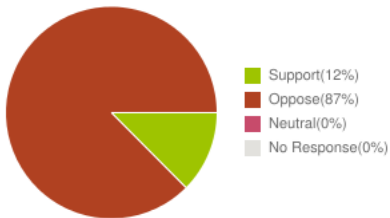
04-08-21 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
4-B ID 21-504 RESOLUTION - Creating the Rental Mediation Program	7	0	7	0
4-C ID 21-502 RESOLUTION - Denouncing the discrimination against the Asian American communities during the COVID-19 crisis in Fresno.	1	1	0	0

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

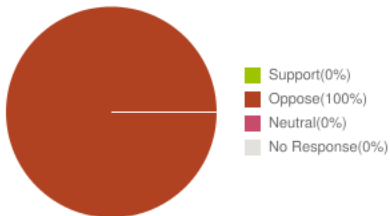
The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for 4-B ID 21-504 RESOLUTION - Creating the Rental Mediation Program

Overall Sentiment



Jennie Guadagno

Location: 93711, Fresno

Submitted At: 3:21pm 04-06-21

My name is Jennie Guadagno. I am a Fresno renter in district 6. I strongly oppose Council President Chavez's Rental Mediation Program. It's deeply flawed and falls way too short of actually addressing Fresno's eviction and homelessness crisis. I urge the Council to vote no. Please listen to the voices and expertise of the community and support the community's eviction diversion program.

Jayla Thomas

Location: 93726, Fresno

Submitted At: 3:18pm 04-06-21

My name is Jayla Thomas. I was born and raised in Fresno. I am a Fresno renters in District 6. I strongly oppose Council President Chavez's Rental Mediation Program. It's deeply flawed and falls way too short of actually addressing Fresno's eviction and homelessness crisis. I urge the Council to vote no. Please listen to the voices

and expertise of the community and support the community's eviction diversion program.

Barbara Gallman

Location: 93711, Fresno
Submitted At: 2:14pm 04-06-21

I find the proposed City Council Rental Mediation Program (RMP) to be inadequate. Fresno is a city where 50% of the occupants are renters; the majority of tenants pay over 30% of their income on rent and utilities, and although the cost of living has been rising for decades, incomes remain flat. To make matters worse, Fresno County suffers an affordable housing shortage of 35,000 units. This is a recipe for housing instability and displacement due to eviction, which the RMP does nothing to mitigate. The Fresno Right To Council Coalition has submitted a comprehensive Right To Council Proposal (RTC), which is based on programs implemented in major cities around the country. The RTC provides preventative and real time interventions proven to reduce evictions and housing displacement: 1)Education On Tenent/Landlord Rights; 2)Rental Assistance For Eviction Avoidance; 3)Partnering With Community Programs For At Risk Renters; 4)Legal Council And Representation For Those Facing Eviction, and more. The City Council proposed RMP would provide two law clerks to service their entire program. Two clerks, who will analyze eviction cases, represent no ones interest, and hope "...both parties will leave the meeting more educated about their rights and responsibilities." With families facing the prospect of dislocated lives and/or homelessness due to evictions, Fresno must do better.

Mellissa JessenHiser

Location: 93722
Submitted At: 2:00pm 04-06-21

I strongly oppose Council President Chavez's Rental Mediation Program. It's deeply flawed and falls way too short of actually addressing Fresno's eviction and homelessness crisis. I urge the Council to vote no. Please listen to the voices and expertise of the community and support the community's eviction diversion program. Any plans by the city council to address eviction and homelessness MUST include the voices of the people living through this crisis. I urge you to put people before profit. It is shameful that in a country with so many resources, any person would live in substandard conditions or without a permanent residence.

Mariah Thompson

Location: 93705-4118, FRESNO
Submitted At: 1:49pm 04-06-21

I submit this comment in my personal capacity as a resident of District 1. I am an attorney specializing in multiple aspects of affordable housing. Prior to my current job, I worked as an eviction defense attorney in Fresno. I strongly oppose the Rental Mediation Program. It is a flawed half measure that will not protect most residents from evictions. A few flaws:

1. Most residents do not seek help until a UD is already filed. A resident has 5 court dates to file an answer. If a resident fails to file an answer timely, the resident will get a default judgment and eviction without trial. This is how most evictions occur. Trial must be set within 21 days. This program does not stay the 5 day deadline and will result in default judgments. In this way it can actually HARM residents.
2. A clerk cannot fully evaluate the legality of the eviction if the eviction has not been filed. You can't evaluate a lawsuit that doesn't exist yet.
3. This does not change the power imbalance in court between tenants, without lawyers, and landlords, who have lawyers.
4. Most residents will not know how to utilize or access this program. Poor individuals without internet access, seniors without internet literacy, farmworkers, and other vulnerable people who do not have access to reliable internet will not be served.

..and a dozen other reasons that there is not space here to describe.

Oppose this program. Talk to UD lawyers.

Janine Nkosi

Location: 93726, Fresno
Submitted At: 10:32am 04-06-21

I strongly oppose the Rental Mediation Program and I urge Fresno City Councilmember to vote no too. Evictions and displacement are a major factor contributing to Fresno's homelessness crisis. Since summer 2019, our university-community coalition has studied the problems of and solutions to the eviction crisis. Our intention was to fully understand the problem and find the most effective way for Fresno to address the eviction and homelessness crisis.

Our Eviction Diversion Program (RTC) is an evidence-based proactive approach that will reduce homelessness in the City of Fresno. We have an opportunity to leverage federal money to establish a long-needed program to ensure that renters fundamental constitutional rights are upheld in the housing and court system.

We know through an abundance of research from other places that already established RTC that there's an extraordinary return on investing in robust comprehensive solutions -- Right to Council -- to mitigate the crisis. This is a once in a generation opportunity. Please do the right thing.

Our proposal was created and vetted by people who are directly impacted by evictions. We thoroughly studied the problem. We found the most effective solution. We found the money. All we need is for our elected leaders to listen. I oppose the Rental Mediation Program. Please support the community's proposal holistic proposal NOT the deeply flawed RMP.

James Mendez

Location:
Submitted At: 3:58pm 04-05-21

I would like the City Council to oppose the Resolution creating an inadequate Rental Mediation Program. Instead, I would like the City Council to support the comprehensive Right To Counsel Community Program which has been presented several times before. <https://leadershipcounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Fresno-Right-to-Counsel-Coalition-Community-Proposal.pdf>

The goal of the RTC Community Proposal is to decrease homelessness by decreasing evictions. The RTC Community Proposal is a comprehensive program that allows ALL income-eligible people who have been served with an eviction notice to have legal representation in eviction court.

The Rental Mediation Program is is an inadequate response to what is a serious and growing problem in Fresno. More than 50% of Fresno residents rent. The majority of tenants are rent burdened and pay more than 30% of their household income on rent and utilities. More than 28,000 households may be vulnerable to eviction on June 30, 2021, when the COVID eviction moratorium ends. The Rental Mediation Program does nothing to keep tenants housed. The Rental Mediation Program provides two law clerks to provide legal information but does not provide any legal representation for tenants that would keep tenants housed.

The Rental Mediation Program does not provide any benefit except that, "both parties will leave the meeting more educated about their rights and responsibilities."