

NEWS

FROM THE OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER
PAUL KORETZ
FIFTH DISTRICT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Alison.Simard@lacity.org, 213-473-7005

Koretz Tenants' Right to Counsel Motion Approved

Los Angeles, CA – August 17, 2018 – The Los Angeles City Council today unanimously approved Councilmember Paul Koretz's [motion](#) calling for a process to create a "Tenants' Right to Counsel" program to provide apartment renters faced with eviction or landlord harassment with legal assistance they might not otherwise be able to obtain. Koretz's proposal, in the form of a motion calls for City staff to develop recommendations on developing the Right to Counsel program, including prospective costs and funding sources and report back to the Council within 120 days.

"I appreciate my colleagues' support for this important concept," Koretz said. "It's a known fact that tenants who have legal representation are better equipped to fight for their rights and less likely to actually be evicted. But many tenants – especially those who are unfamiliar with the laws and how to deal with the system – lack both the financial means and knowledge needed to find competent legal representation in a timely manner. Many of those who are unjustly evicted wind up among our city's newly homeless. That's who we are aiming to help with this proposal."

Since introducing the motion in June, preliminary discussions with legal services providers, landlords, tenant advocates and Mayor Eric Garcetti's office indicate the intense interest there is in the issue from stakeholders on all sides. Before today's vote, Koretz told the Councilmembers he wants to see a robust dialogue to develop a program that helps tenants who need and deserve help. Councilmember Joe Buscaino asked that the needs of so-called mom-and-pop landlords with limited resources could also be factored into the discussions.

With Council approval in hand, the City Attorney, the Housing and Community Investment Department, the Chief Legislative Analyst, Mayor Garcetti's office and Councilmember Koretz are expected to map out a process for involving stakeholders and developing a program over the coming months.

This effort is seen as a potential complement to the City's newly-invigorated effort to combat homelessness. The 2018 Homeless Count numbers showed that nearly 10,000 people experienced homelessness for the first time in 2017 and many of them were among the approximately 30,000 L.A. renters who received Unlawful Detainers (final eviction notices) last year.

With vacancy rates running well below 5% around the city, rents continuing to rise, incomes continuing to stagnate, and a strong real estate market fueling development pressures that are leading to thousands of rent-controlled units to be vacated and demolished for redevelopment or converted to condominiums, the pressures on tenants are as powerful as they've ever been.

Councilmember Paul Koretz
200 North Spring Street, Room 440
Los Angeles, CA 90012