

The Coalition for Economic Survival is providing its full support and assistance to the Barrington Plaza Tenants effort to stop this unjust evictions

Los Angeles Has the Power to Challenge One of the Largest Mass Eviction in City History, Legal Experts Say

By Jessica Goodheart -
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Last May, the landlord of Barrington Plaza, on Los Angeles' pricy Westside, affixed notices to the doors of 577 apartments, initiating the largest mass eviction from rent control housing in the city in at least four decades.

Following tenant protest, City Councilmember Traci Park, who represents the district, sought guidance from the office of Los Angeles City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto over whether the city had grounds to intervene in the evictions. Feldstein Soto's office argued that the evictions were legal, suggesting there was little the city could do to prevent them from taking place. But some experts, including the general counsel for the Santa Monica Rent Control Board, say the city of Los Angeles is failing to use the powers it has to challenge the evictions and ought to do so, given the scope of the impact on tenants and the city's affordable housing stock.

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Jordan Kaplan, CEO and President of Douglas Emmett, photographed in front of Barrington Plaza in 2014.

Photo: Gary Friedman/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

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The city could launch an investigation into whether the evictions violate state and local law; it could join an ongoing tenant lawsuit against the landlord, file its own civil action to halt the evictions, or even withhold building permits to ensure the landlord complies with renter protections, according to several lawyers familiar with California tenant law consulted by Capital & Main.



What the Experts Say:

Leah Simon-Weisberg, chair of the Berkeley Rent Board

Leah Simon-Weisberg, who is the elected chair of the Berkeley Rent Board and a tenant attorney, is concerned about the precedent that the Barrington Plaza eviction sets. "Can you imagine if the city really doesn't do anything about this, what is this going to mean? Is every big building just going to go empty?"

Former Los Angeles Councilmember Mike Bonin

Former Councilman Mike Bonin, who represented the 11th Council District, where Barrington Plaza is located, before his retirement in 2022, called Feldstein Soto's legal determination "bad advice" that threatens the city's efforts to combat homelessness. "You literally cannot make progress in the fight against homelessness if you lose affordable housing," he said in an interview last fall.

Cities of West Hollywood and Santa Monica

Los Angeles' response to the eviction stands in contrast to those of two neighboring cities. Last fall, West Hollywood and Santa Monica, both with high concentrations of renters, passed resolutions supporting the Barrington Plaza Tenants Association lawsuit filed against Douglas Emmett Inc. for violating local renter protection laws.

Alison Regan, gen'l counsel, Santa Monica Rent Control Board

Alison Regan, general counsel for Santa Monica Rent Control Board, agrees with the tenants' interpretation of the state law. "If you're kicking out all of your tenants, you have to actually intend to get out of the residential rental market," said Regan. "You can't use it to take those rental units off the market temporarily, and then renovate them and then return them back to the rental market, which seems to be what's happening here."

Larry Gross, executive director, Coalition for Economic Survival

"They want to push everyone out and transform the building into a high-priced luxury building and jack up rent," said Larry Gross, executive director of the [Coalition for Economic Survival \(CES\)](#), which is supporting the Barrington Plaza Tenants Association in its lawsuit.

Deepika Sharma, director, Housing Law & Policy Clinic USC Gould School of Law

Deepika Sharma, director of the Housing Law & Policy Clinic at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law, said that the city is well positioned to scrutinize the mass displacement because it houses the departments with oversight over the renovations and the evictions. "I believe the L.A. city attorney could file a case and, at a minimum, make an inquiry," said Sharma. Such actions would be "in the city's interest to preserve the remaining affordable housing that we have."

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The Ellis Act has resulted in the removal of over 29,714 rent-controlled units from the market in the city of Los Angeles since 2001, according to a [collaborative research effort](#) by the [Coalition for Economic Survival](#) and the Eviction Mapping Project. In its application to trigger the Ellis Act, Douglas Emmett checked a box indicating it was undecided as to the property's future use. Regan said that the law should be amended so that landlords who invoke it must say what they intend to do with their properties.

The case could be decided as early as mid-April, according to Frances Campbell of [Campbell & Farahani, LLP](#), an Agoura Hills-based law firm that is representing the tenants.

Robert Lawrence, a tenant who faces a May 8 move-out date, said city leaders' response to the eviction has been "completely disappointing and underwhelming in terms of what they've done for us."

\$ You Can Help Support the \$

Barrington Plaza Tenants Mass Eviction Fight

More Help And Support is Needed for the Barrington Plaza Tenant Fight to Stop This Unjust Ellis Act Eviction

The Coalition for Economic Survival (CES) sees the important fight of the Barrington Plaza Tenant Association as a fight that is critical to all renters in the City of Los Angeles. If this landlord is successful in its illegal use of the state Ellis Act it could open the door for other tenants to face similar evictions. These evictions must be stopped! That is why these tenants have CES' full support and we urge they receive the support of every tenant and tenant organization in the city.

The law suit against this multi-million dollar corporation is likely to be expensive.

You can help by donating to the Barrington Plaza Tenants GoFundMe Account to help them maintain a legal effort to fight their eviction.

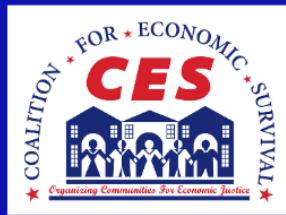
Support the Barrington Plaza Tenants
Efforts to Stop Their Unjust Ellis Eviction

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<https://www.gofundme.com/f/barrington-plaza-tenant-association>



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Email: HelpingLARenters@gmail.com
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To sign up for the next Coalition for Economic Survival
Tenants' Rights Clinic via ZOOM
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The Clinic serves the entire Southern California area.
Accommodations for Spanish, Russian speakers are provided.

One-On-One Assistance With an Attorney.

CES holds the Clinic **Every Saturday** via Zoom at 10 am.
and every Wednesday at 6 pm for West Hollywood Renters.
To request a link to register for any Clinic
email: HelpingLARenters@gmail.com.

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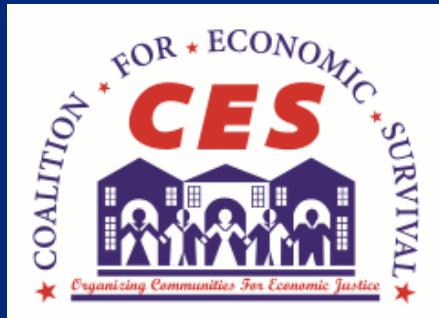
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