

National Low Income Housing Coalition

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) is a national affordable housing organization based in Washington DC. NLIHC's goals are to preserve existing federally assisted homes and housing resources, expand the supply of low-income housing, and establish housing stability as the primary purpose of federal low-income housing policy.

LARRY GROSS REFLECTS ON FIVE DECADES OF TENANT ORGANIZING IN LOS ANGELES

A Marathon, Not a Sprint

By Courtney Cooperman, NLIHC-4/25/24

This article is adapted from an interview with Larry Gross, executive director of the Coalition for Economic Survival.

[The Coalition for Economic Survival \(CES\)](#) is a grassroots community-based organization that organizes tenants in the greater Los Angeles area and empowers them to impact the decision-making processes that affect their day-to-day lives. Since its establishment in 1973, CES has "had a hand in most of the laws that protect tenants in the city of Los Angeles," as founder and executive director Larry Gross explains. CES has led the effort to bring rent stabilization to Los Angeles and West Hollywood, organized tenant associations, worked to preserve HUD-subsidized and government-assisted housing, and helped tenants purchase their buildings to keep them permanently affordable.



In the 1970s, Los Angeles faced exorbitant rent increases. CES started organizing tenants and successfully advocated for the City of Los Angeles and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County to adopt rent stabilization laws. However, after a party change in the county's

Board of Supervisors in the early 1980s, the county rolled back these laws. CES and its allies put forth a ballot initiative to permanently establish rent stabilization in Los Angeles County. The initiative did not pass but received an overwhelming majority of support in West Hollywood, an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County. CES's organizing led to the incorporation of West Hollywood, with an elected City Council that immediately approved a rent stabilization ordinance. The incorporation of West Hollywood as the first-ever "city built on rent control" is one of the proudest moments of Gross's career, but CES's impressive track record makes it impossible to choose just one. "The most invigorating and joyous thing that I see – because there's a lot of hills and valleys – is seeing a tenant recognize their power and realizing that they have the capabilities to make change," said Gross.



Throughout Gross's five decades of tenant organizing, the housing crisis has only intensified. "Back then, when people were being priced out of their homes or evicted, they [...] could find other housing. Today, it's impossible. If you're evicted [...] you're likely to be pushed out of your community [...] So that's particularly hard for

disabled people, for seniors, for people with children [...] Your whole social network of friends and services, doctors, pharmacies [...] are totally lost because you're pushed out."

In the face of an accelerating crisis, Gross has seen the tenant movement expand significantly as more organizations step into tenants' rights issues. He highlighted the conversion of affordable homes into luxury units, the demolition of rent-controlled units, and the failure of government to address these problems as causes of housing unaffordability. Gross emphasized the need to "preserve and protect our existing affordable housing, as well as committing to build more affordable housing."

When asked what advice he would give to a tenant organizer new to the movement, Gross responded, "Recognize this as being a marathon, and not a sprint. It takes a lot of work to build a base, give tenants confidence, and win their trust. Solutions aren't going to happen overnight, and you have to be prepared for the lows to get to the highs. It takes a lot of work, a lot of determination and commitment, and you can't give up. You've just got to keep fighting and organizing and growing." He also emphasized the importance of trusting and empowering people with lived experience: "Your best advice and ability to understand situations and solutions come from the people who are directly impacted. Relying on and ensuring tenant leadership is key to success."



MEDIA COVERAGE

Low Income Tenants Faces Eviction in Torrance

Here is a news story from Kristine Lazar, "On Your Side" reporter at CBS Los Angeles News/KCAL News that features [Coalition for Economic Survival](#) Executive Director Larry Gross. It reports on the approximately 70 low income Torrance renters who received a letter on March 14 instructing them to vacate their units by May 1, 2024. The letter cited demolition and remodeling as reasons for closure. CES believes it is likely an illegal eviction.



[Click Here or Below to View News Report](#)



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

Barrington Plaza Eviction Trial Week

2 Comes to an End

The trial of the lawsuit filed by the Barrington Plaza Tenants Association against their landlord, Douglas Emmett, Inc. continues in LA Superior Court in Santa Monica. The lawsuit seeks to stop the mass eviction at the 712 rent controlled Barrington Plaza Apartments in West Los Angeles based on a state law that allows landlords to evict if they plan to remove the units from the rental market.

As week two comes to an end we've had Douglas Emmett CES Jordan Kaplan on the stand for 3 days. Kaplan admitted that he made the sole decision to evict tenants using the Ellis Act. He also admitted that he sought an exemption from the City from the rent control ordinance to be able to evict all the tenants. In addition, he stated that he always wanted to keep the building as apartment, which would be a violation of the Ellis Act that require an owner to permanently go of the rental business to evict under the state law.

A lot of the testimony has centered on the installation of fire sprinklers which was never mandated by the City and it is our contention does not require tenants to be evicted.

The tenants' attorney Fran Campbell has been fierce in court drilling the Douglas Emmett witnesses. She also informed the judge that the landlord's relocation specialists are continuing to harass tenants telling them they have to be out by May 8 and falsely telling them they won't receive relocation assistance if they are not out. As a result, the Judge ordered that remaining tenants can stay to at least June 22 pending the outcome of the trial. A small victory for tenants.

The trial will continue next week.

Barrington Plaza Mass Evictions

Trial Update

END OF WEEK 2



\$ 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

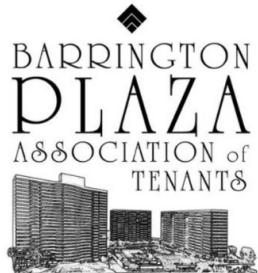
Angeles. If this landlord is successful in it's illegal use of the state Ellis Act it could open the door for other tenants to face similar evictions. These evictions must be stopped! That is why these tenants have CES' fully support and we urge they receive the support of every tenant and tenant organization 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.

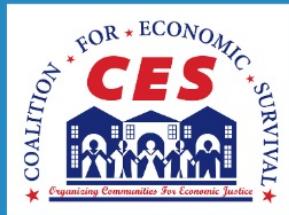
Support the Barrington Plaza Tenants
Efforts to Stop Their Unjust Ellis Eviction

DONATE NOW!

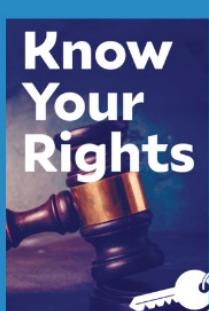


Make a donation by clicking

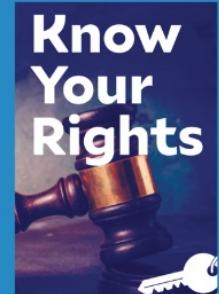
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/barrington-plaza-tenant-association>



COALITION FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL



TENANTS' RIGHTS CLINIC



Saturdays - 10 am

Email: HelpingLARenters@gmail.com
to Request a Link to Register for Clinic

Serving All LA Area Tenants
Language Accommodations for Spanish and Russian

ATTENTION ALL RENTERS! ***Know Your Rights By Attending the Coalition for Economic Survival Tenants' Rights Zoom Clinic***

To sign up for the next Coalition for Economic Survival
Tenants' Rights Clinic via ZOOM
Request a Link by emailing:
HelpingLArenters@gmail.com

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.

Donate Now to the Coalition for Economic Survival



Donate to the Coalition for Economic Survival (CES)

Help Support the Coalition for Economic Survival. Donate Now!

One-Time

Monthly

\$10

\$25

\$50

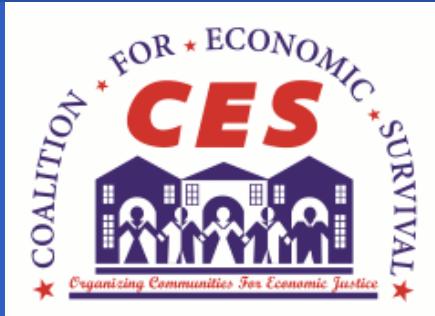
\$100

\$250

\$500

\$1,000

\$ Other



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