

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



Judge Rules Against Landlord in Highly Anticipated LA Mass Eviction Case

By David Wagner

June 13, 2024

In a highly anticipated decision that could have broad implications for renters across California, a Superior Court judge has ruled against a landlord seeking to carry out one of the largest mass evictions in Los Angeles history.



The judge's determination means more than 100 tenants still living at Barrington Plaza — a 712-unit West L.A. high-rise apartment complex — will get to stay. Some long-term tenants pay far below market rates due to the city's rent stabilization ordinance, and fear they would not be able to find affordable housing anywhere in the region if forced to leave.

"This is, no doubt, one of the most important tenants' rights legal victories in state history," said Larry Gross, executive director of the [Coalition for Economic Survival](#) in an email on the ruling. "This victory shows when tenants unite and organize they can win."



The backstory at Barrington

Santa Monica-based corporate landlord Douglas Emmett originally filed evictions against 577 households at Barrington Plaza back in May of 2023. The company said the property needed to be completely vacated in order to install fire sprinklers. Two large fires have broken out in the apartment buildings in recent years, with a 2020 fire resulting in the death of one person.

California's Ellis Act, which allows landlords to clear their buildings when they plan to "go out of business." Thursday's tentative ruling from Judge H. Jay Ford, III — likely to become the final ruling after another court hearing — hinged on the question of what exactly it means for a landlord to go out of business.

Both sides agreed the Ellis Act requires owners to exit the rental business in order to vacate buildings. But they disagreed on how long owners must keep those properties off the market.

The tenants' attorney, Frances Campbell, argued the owners of Barrington Plaza had no plans to get out of the landlord business. Instead, she said, they planned to refurbish and re-rent the apartments at higher rates. Douglas Emmett's attorneys said removing tenants for rehab work that could take years was in effect going out of business, even if the move was temporary.



Judge says Barrington was not going out of business

Ultimately, Ford said the landlord in this case had no intention of permanently going out of business when it filed the evictions. Rather, he said, the plan was to continue renting the apartments after work was complete.

"The Court concludes [the landlord's] intent to temporarily withdraw Barrington Plaza from the rental market with the present intent to return it to the rental market after the renovations are completed is inconsistent with an intent to go out of the rental business under the Ellis Act," Ford wrote.

Representatives for Douglas Emmett said the company has not yet reached a decision on whether to appeal the ruling, but fire safety work will continue.



'When we stick together we can win'

Renters fighting to stay banded together through the Barrington Plaza Tenants Association, which filed wrongful eviction cases in response to Douglas Emmett's actions. eviction notice."

Monique Gomez, one of the tenants involved in organizing these efforts, said if the judge had ruled in favor of the landlord, it would have opened the

floodgates for other landlords throughout the state to use renovations as a pretext to evict rent-controlled tenants.

"We have been fighting these bogus evictions for over a year now," Gomez said in an email responding to the ruling. "Tenants here have faced harassment, intimidation and uncertainty without little to no help from the city. It shows when we stick together we can win. I am overjoyed."





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Barrington Plaza Tenants Call Out Their City Councilmember for Lack of Support of Tenants Facing Mass Eviction

Barrington Plaza Tenants Association Members Andrew Rahn and Miki Goral testified at the Los Angeles City Council on June 18 regarding their landmark victory in beating back their bogus Ellis Act evictions and calling out their Councilmember, Traci Park, for doing absolutely nothing to support their fight.

You can watch their testimony below.



The [Coalition for Economic Survival](#) and [Barrington Plaza Tenants Association](#) would like to thank the numerous allied organization and individuals who provided important support that led to this victory.

Of course this would not have happened without the brilliant legal minds and skills of attorneys Fran Campbell and Nima Farahani of the [law firm of Campbell Farahani LLP](#).

There are those who deserve special acknowledge for the crucial assistance they provided. We would like to extend special thanks to the following:

- **AIDS Healthcare Foundation & Housing is a Human Right** - for providing significant financial support for the lawsuit and for bringing out their supporters to court hearings and protests.
- **California State Senator Ben Allen** - for his financial support to the lawsuit. Senator Allen represents the Barrington Plaza tenants
- **Former LA City Councilmember Mike Bonin** - who previously represented the tenants and stood in the way of the evictions while he served on the Council. He continued that support after leaving office.
- **Former Santa Monica Mayor & current Move On Policy Director Denny Zane.**
- **The Cities of West Hollywood & Santa Monica** - for passing resolutions in support of the tenants' fight.
- **Santa Monicans for Renters Rights & the Santa Monica Democratic Club** - for bringing out their members and supports to court hearings and protests.

.....And, many more.



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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.

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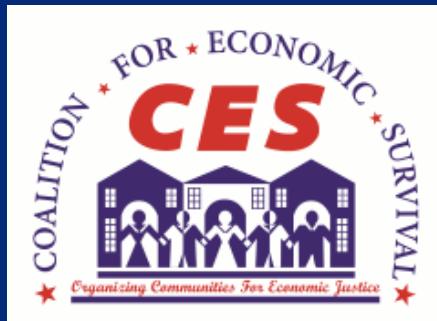
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