

Smokefree Air For Everyone (SAFE) - Seeking Pediatrician Advocate

City of Los Angeles Councilmember [Paul Koretz](#) has introduced a motion about passing a law that would regulate smoking in multi-unit housing in the city of Los Angeles. According to the CDC, more than 1/3 of apartment residents are breathing a neighbor's tobacco smoke. Thousands of surveys conducted by SAFE in the last 15 years (With funding from the California Department of Public Health) showed the same results.

A group of health organizations including the American Lung Association, the American Cancer Society, the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, and SAFE have been working with the office of Councilmember Koretz via his legislative deputy, Jeff Ebenstein in support of the motion. Over 90 ordinances that regulate smoking in apartments have been passed so far in California and most also include condominiums. (Most of those ordinances were passed in Northern CA.)

Unfortunately, local Tenants' Rights organizations have been indicating their opposition for years to any law in the City of Los Angeles that would regulate smoking in apartments. These organizations are very well respected and very powerful politically. They believe the law would be used to evict long-term tenants whose rent is much lower than market rate.

The complication is The Rent Control Law in the City of Los Angeles. It was passed in the 1970's when the dangers of exposure to tobacco smoke were not well known. The Rent Control law states that once a tenant moves in, the landlord cannot change the conditions of tenancy. People tend to remain in rent-controlled units for many years and as a result, there are many buildings that house people who smoke and who are seriously affecting the health of newer tenants because tobacco smoke will drift throughout a building. The landlord cannot take action to protect tenants from exposure to tobacco and marijuana smoke.

The City of Berkeley, which has a rent control law similar to that of Los Angeles, passed an excellent smoke free housing law, which protects tenancy and provides a total smoke free environment. The office of Councilmember Koretz hopes that a pediatrician could join the next meeting of the health organizations and leaders of Tenants' Rights groups to join the effort to protect LA's children who live in apartments from tobacco and marijuana smoke.

The time is right for health groups and tenants' rights groups to sit at the table together and come to some understanding. A meeting is planned for Wednesday, June 19th from 12 noon to 2 pm at Los Angeles City Hall in Councilmember Koretz' office.

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Please register via this link if you are interested <https://forms.gle/QTxnR65dfY5Btr5F6>