

Berkeley Tenants Union



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April 19, 2019

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol, Room 2187
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 403-7394

RE: Support – SB 529 (Durazo)

Dear Chair Jackson & Committee Members:

On behalf of the Berkeley Tenants Union, I write in support of SB 529 (Durazo), a bill that would provide crucial protections for vulnerable tenants.

The Berkeley Tenants Union advocates for tenants legislatively, both in the City Council and the State Legislature. We also work with tenants directly to address their issues.

Much as a labor union is key to winning fair treatment of workers, a tenant association is a crucial part of balancing power between landlord and tenants. Acting together, tenants can gain bargaining power, but too often tenants who organize with their neighbors frequently face retaliation and eviction.

SB 529 recognizes the right to form a tenant association and extends crucial protections to tenant association members. Specifically, the bill provides that any tenant who forms or joins a tenant association shall have the following rights:

1. No eviction of the tenants in the tenant association except for cause.
 2. A right to engage in rent strike – landlord must bargain in good faith about grievances and may not evict for nonpayment during the negotiation period.
 3. Five times current penalties for retaliation or violation of this law
- The bill provides essential protections for tenants to prevent retaliation for organizing activities. We request your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Julia Cato,
/s/

Berkeley Tenants Union, Chair of Steering Committee