



GET TICKETS | EAT|SEE|HEAR MOVIES

A devastating analysis of the tax cut shows it's done virtually no economic good



Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge is so ambitious Disneyland fans may not be ready for it



'Family Guy's' Set MacFarlane this conserv >

EDITORIAL EDITORIALS OPINION

# California can't solve its homelessness crisis without protecting renters

By THE TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD  
MAY 29, 2019 | 1:50 PM





Organizers with Housing Long Beach, a local advocacy group pushing for rent control and eviction protections, protesting with tenants. (Los Angeles Times)

Across California, cities and counties are reporting that homelessness — already at crisis levels in some communities — has only gotten worse.

In the Bay Area, Alameda County reported a 43% increase in homelessness from the last tally two years ago; Santa Clara County was up 31% and San Francisco was up 17%. The situation is just as dire for Southern California communities. Orange County saw a 43% increase in homelessness; San Bernardino County was up 23% and Riverside was up 22%.

Los Angeles County leaders are expected to announce soon that their county also saw double-digit growth in its homeless population. This, despite the county spending more than \$600 million last year to ease the crisis.

Why, when counties and the state are pouring money into shelters and services, is homelessness growing? Because, even as regions are moving thousands of individuals off the streets, more people are becoming homeless, primarily because of rising rents and the lack of affordable housing.

Without question, California has to build more housing, and particularly affordable housing, whether by providing incentives or subsidies for construction. But in the meantime, if California has any hope of easing homelessness, the state has to adopt tenant protections to ensure that people living on the edge financially don't get pushed into homelessness by exorbitant rent hikes or unwarranted evictions.

# Barring landlords from gouging tenants during a housing crisis should be an easy call for lawmakers.

Share quote & link



Yet the Assembly is waffling on two bills that would enact temporary protections that could help slow the increase in homelessness in the coming decade while California communities build much-needed affordable housing.

Assembly Bill 1482 is a statewide rent control measure designed to stop the most egregious rent hikes. The bill, by Assemblyman David Chiu (D-San Francisco), would set a statewide cap on annual rent hikes at 5% plus inflation. The proposal is similar to Oregon's first-in-the-nation law that limits rent increases to 7% plus inflation.

California lawmakers are typically reticent about rent control because of concerns that it could discourage apartment construction. And tenant protection laws always have an uphill climb in Sacramento, where property owners and real estate interests spend far more on lobbying and campaign donations than tenant groups. To ease owners' concerns, Chiu amended the bill so it would sunset in 2030 — making it more of a crisis response than a permanent change in policy — and exempt properties built in the last 10 years from the rent caps.

Even with those concessions, the bill is struggling to get enough votes to pass the Assembly and continue on to the Senate. That's a shame. More than 14 million Californians live in rental units that are not subject to any kind of rent control. Some 80% of low-income tenants are considered rent burdened, meaning they spend more than a third of their income on rent. Barring landlords from gouging tenants during a housing crisis should be an easy call for lawmakers.

[Enter the Fray: First takes on the news of the minute »](#)

There is also lukewarm support for a companion bill, AB 1481, that would require landlords to show "just cause" — such as a failure to pay rent or a lease violation — before they could evict a renter. The authors, Assemblymen Tim Grayson (D-Concord) and Rob Bonta (D-Alameda), have also added a 10-year sunset clause.

Apartment owners have complained the bill would add to their expenses and force them to raise rents, while also making it harder to remove bad tenants who may be engaged in illegal activity. But just-cause eviction laws don't shield bad tenants; landlords could still proceed with an eviction if a tenant failed to pay the rent, violated the terms of the lease, caused a nuisance or broke the law. The goal is to provide law-abiding tenants with some measure of due process and protection from arbitrary or discriminatory eviction.

Both of these bills are designed to give tenants more stability and security in times of skyrocketing rents — and hopefully slow the rise in homelessness.



### Opinion Newsletter Weekly

Op-eds and editorials on the most important topics of the day.

ENTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS >

#### HIDE COMMENTS

sharenbronx | Log Out

Los Angeles Times welcomes civil dialogue about our stories. By commenting, you agree to [these terms](http://www.latimes.com/la-commenting-guidelines-faqs-20170307-htmlstory.html) (<http://www.latimes.com/la-commenting-guidelines-faqs-20170307-htmlstory.html>). Please flag inappropriate comments.

#### Promoted Comments



#1 **gallgu** 0.75 ENGT(s) +

Rent control, AKA prop 13 for renters, is sorely needed.

0 ^ 0 v Reply Promote

18.4 ENGT(s) ☰ Connected reader sharenbronx ▾



Type comment here. Be relevant, respectful, honest, discreet and responsible. Use engagements to promote comment. You have 18.4 ENGT(s)

Post Promote Cancel

Sort by newest ▾

[All Comments](#) [Profile](#) [Activity](#) [Help](#)

[Subscribe](#)



**Charles Valentin** 9:43 AM, May. 30, 2019

([https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot\\_e09b0c6576d9c69c5700b7413093bc02bd4a48ae](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot_e09b0c6576d9c69c5700b7413093bc02bd4a48ae))

"other homeless have come and gone before-  
On the morrow they will leave us, as our hopes have proven before.  
Then the homeless said, 'Nevermore.'"

With apologies to EAP.

0 ^ 0 v Reply Promote Actions ▾



**jbrown86** 7:24 AM, May. 30, 2019 ([https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot\\_3c4ddcdc50e867081d01f1a4a336074ce430b6b5](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot_3c4ddcdc50e867081d01f1a4a336074ce430b6b5))

The better solution would be taxing the locational value of land rather than the buildings on top of it, while upzoning neighborhoods and encouraging better transit. Zoning only for duplexes or single family homes and forcing the poor to buy cars to live anywhere close to big cities has been disastrous for providing enough homes, while it's encouraged speculation on valuable properties without building any additional or affordable housing.

0 ^ 0 v Reply Promote Actions ▾



**William Hoke** 11:29 PM, May. 29, 2019

([https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot\\_6949c48123bb6ba99706a1e11c6fd30f57ec0a92](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot_6949c48123bb6ba99706a1e11c6fd30f57ec0a92))

The editorial states "California lawmakers are typically reticent about rent control because of concerns that it could discourage apartment construction." Is there any doubt? Yet, the legislature plunges ahead, catering even more to renters. Somehow the assumption is that landlords hate renters and want to make their life hell. Why? They are the customers, and landlords really, really like a good customer. But "just cause" will make it impossible to remove a tenant dealing drugs. Who is going to sign the complaint?

The LA Times has yet to understand that

- 1) rent control helps existing tenants at the expense of future ones, and
- 2) homelessness is not a housing issue, it is a mental health issue.

1 ^ 1 v Reply Promote Actions ▾



**jbrown86** in reply to **William Hoke** “The editorial states "Californ... more »

7:15 AM, May. 30, 2019 ([https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot\\_e5d69b891affae63f93be9cb08a7aa3a59de0c5b](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot_e5d69b891affae63f93be9cb08a7aa3a59de0c5b))

"landlords could still proceed with an eviction if a tenant failed to pay the rent, violated the terms of the lease, caused a nuisance or broke the law."

Please read the article before commenting on it. And I'm not sure what your solution to mental health issues, since sleeping out on the streets doesn't exactly beget the environment needed for a consistent therapeutic or pharmaceutical related treatment for serious mental health issues.

0 ^ 0 v Reply Promote Actions v



**gallgu** 5:48 PM, May. 29, 2019 ([https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot\\_25290baf6c6f47eedd812bb1facbb70bfdbca45](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot_25290baf6c6f47eedd812bb1facbb70bfdbca45))

Rent control, AKA prop 13 for renters, is sorely needed.

0 ^ 0 v Reply Promote Actions v



**californiagoldfarmstand** 4:06 PM, May. 29, 2019 ([https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot\\_975631f09860a53653b1fcbb33e699d910d9c72c](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant-protections-bills-homeless-crisis-20190529-story.html#sot_975631f09860a53653b1fcbb33e699d910d9c72c))

The homeless problem is due to drugs, not rents. And the HUD report showed that 50% of the homeless have been here for 10 years or less, meaning they are not native Californians. Regardless, these bills are bad because everything economic is psychological. Tell a landlord they can't raise rents or they will be limited by the government in some way and the majority of landlords who never raise the rent or only raise it once in awhile, will immediately hike it up the maximum allowed every year. You will cause rents to go up faster in more properties than otherwise would have. Tell a landlord that it is impossible to get rid of a bad tenant and they will screen tenants more heavily which disadvantages the poor who all have bad credit. Can we require reporters and editors to take a class in economics?

5 ^ 0 v Reply Promote Actions v



**jbrown86** in reply to [californiagoldfarmstand](#)

“ The homeless problem is due to... more »

7:12 AM, May. 30, 2019 (<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-tenant->)



What it's like to pilot the Millennium Falcon May 29, 2019

MAY 29, 2019



# What it's like to pilot the Millennium Falcon

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge opens, and Los Angeles Times reporter Todd Martens takes a look at the Millennium Falcon and [finds out what it's like to fly](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/hero-complex/la-et-hc-millennium-falcon-ride-disneyland-20190528-story.html) the hunk of junk in the Smugglers Run attraction.

## MOST READ

---

### COLUMN

A devastating analysis of the tax cut shows it's done virtually no economic good

MAY 29, 2019



### COLUMN ONE

'Family Guy's' Seth MacFarlane was attacked by this conservative TV watchdog. Now they're friends

3:00 AM



### HERO COMPLEX

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge is so ambitious Disneyland fans may not be ready for it

MAY 29, 2019



### POLITICS

California plan to prevent big rent hikes advances, but only after it's limited to three years

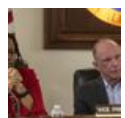
MAY 29, 2019



### L.A. NOW

At 'buck wild' meetings, racism and corruption allegations tear school district apart

3h



## LATEST EDITORIALS

---

To prevent wildfires, California may need to endure power blackouts

3:10 AM



No, we shouldn't pump desert groundwater near Joshua Tree to help store electricity



MAY 29, 2019



California can't solve its homelessness crisis without protecting renters

MAY 29, 2019



Robert Mueller is a man of too few words about Trump and obstruction

MAY 29, 2019



Enough horse deaths. Santa Anita should stop racing for the season

MAY 29, 2019



Sign up for our newsletters

Subscribe for unlimited access



[About/Contact](#)

[Archives](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Terms](#)

[Site map](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Corrections](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[L.A. Times careers](#)

[Find a job](#)

[Shop](#)

Copyright © 2019, Los Angeles Times