

Oakland Tribune

Nuisance Eviction Ordinance is misunderstood

Tuesday, March 16, 2004 - THE Nuisance Eviction Ordinance that I introduced is not intended to "create homelessness, make your landlord into Big Brother, tear apart families, or decrease the safety of our communities," as stated by Sitara Nieves and Vivian Lee in a recent "My Word" column. Quite the contrary.

The Nuisance Eviction Ordinance is intended to return peace and a comfortable environment to all residents of Oakland in their neighborhoods, a fact that I may point out they are entitled to.

Ms. Nieves and Ms. Lee have failed in their attempt to fully understand the very nature of the Nuisance Eviction Ordinance. How does NEO work? The city manager and city attorney review police records of people engaged in illegal drug sales, illegal weapon possession or use, or violence at the rental properties where the people live.

The city manager and city attorney then decide if these tenants' activities endanger the other tenants and if there is sufficient evidence to warrant their eviction in order to protect the safety of the other tenants and the community. If the city decides the tenant should be evicted, the city sends a notice to the landlord to evict the tenant and a similar notice to the tenant. In the case where the landlord is threatened by the tenant, the landlord can ask the city attorney to carry out the eviction.

As an advocate for clean and decent housing, the rehabilitation of those who are engaged in illegal activities, and one who has constantly supported the co-existence of both landlords and tenants, the Nuisance Eviction Ordinance is a tool to eradicate the drug solicitation and the constant fear of our residents (homeowners and tenants) who have been subjected to live amidst the constant solicitation of drug users, drug dealers and folks engaged in illegal activities, and who are held hostage in their own neighborhoods.

With the number of homicides occurring in our city -- and those homicides statistically have been related to the drug trafficking -- the Nuisance Eviction Ordinance becomes an essential tool in removing these elements from our neighborhoods. This ordinance is not a battle between landlords and tenants. It is a quality-of-life issue, and assures that residents who reside in Oakland should not fear the possibilities of sitting on their front porches, or their children being exposed to those tenants who are determined to create havoc in the communities without a second thought to the benefit of a comfortable environment for their neighbors.

This excerpt is provided by the Rental Housing Association of Northern Alameda County. www.rhanac.org 510-893-9873

Keep in mind that those who are engaged in illegal activity and those who are subjected to the Nuisance Eviction Ordinance have no intention of taking advantage of the many programs that exist for turning their lives around and making a positive contribution to their communities. This ordinance protects homeowners, fellow tenants who want to live a comfortable life and landlords who are committed to creating a safe and comfortable environment for their remaining tenants. So again, we look for support of this ordinance for the many residents in Oakland who want to preserve the quality of life in their respective neighborhoods.

Larry Reid is the Oakland City Council member for District 7.