

**From:** [Palo Alto Forward](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item #16 - Rent Registry Program  
**Date:** Sunday, November 26, 2023 11:28:01 PM  
**Attachments:** [Cmnt Ltr CC Rent Registry \(11.26.23\).pdf](#)

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Please find the attached letter related to Item #16 on tomorrow's (11/27) Council agenda.

Thank you,

--

Amie Ashton  
Executive Director, Palo Alto Forward  
650-793-1585



November 26, 2023

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item #16 - Rent Registry Program**

Mayor Kou and Honorable City Council Members,

Thank you for taking on the establishment of a rent registry program on behalf of the almost half of our community who are renters. We know it was not an easy feat to get to this point and we applaud the coordination and determination shown by Council and staff in pursuit of this rental registry ordinance.

We fully support the rent registry program, not only because it will lead to better implementation of existing renter protections but it will also help us make more informed housing policy decisions in the future. With better data and a more complete understanding of the rental housing landscape, we can dispel myths and confirm underlying trends - and ultimately lessen the impact of our severe housing crisis on local residents.

We urge Council to ensure the ordinance language is particularly clear and simple related to Event-based Registration Amendments. Knowing how and why tenants leave is key in crafting housing policy. This clarity in the ordinance would also ensure future data collection tools are simple, usable, and effective - which landlords will definitely appreciate.

Given the exciting recent incorporation of the Palo Alto Renters' Association into Palo Alto Forward, we look forward to future advocacy and education around the issues our renters face. We hope to continue the dialog on renter issues as we also work towards our common goal of increasing the housing supply locally.

Thank you again for your careful attention to this important issue.

Amie Ashton  
Executive Director and on Behalf of the Board  
Palo Alto Forward

**From:** [Hamilton Hitchings](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Lait, Jonathan](#)  
**Subject:** Please consider exempting single rental unit owners from the rental registry  
**Date:** Sunday, November 26, 2023 9:23:43 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

Dear City Council,

I respectfully request that you consider an exemption from the proposed rental registry for non-professional owners who own a single rental unit. Exempting them would alleviate staff's administrative burden significantly. Especially given that only 8% of the owners are professional owners, who own multiple units that represent 70% of the total rental supply.

Many of these individual unit owners depend on rental income for their retirement or may have retained their property after relocating or are renting it while on extended absence. Some are renting out their ADUs. Imposing additional regulations could deter them from offering these units for rent or maintaining them as rental properties. If the bar is raised on renting out their property they could also seek a property manager, which would be a logical time to convert it to a short-term AirBnB rental, thus removing properties from the long-term rental market. Or at very least the property managers will raise the price.

My own rental home is at half the price per square of the Palomino workforce housing, and I have not increased the rent for many years. My tenants have typically been families with multiple children attending PAUSD schools.

I urge you to consider these points carefully. An exemption for single-unit owners could support the sustainability of an affordable rental market and serve in the community's best interests.

Thank you.

Hamilton Hitchings

**From:** [herb](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#); [Clerk, City](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: November 27, 2023 Council Meeting, Item #16: Residential Rental Unit Registry Program  
**Date:** Sunday, November 26, 2023 5:19:36 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

### **CORRECTION**

In the fifth paragraph of my November 23, 2023 email letter forwarded below I used the term "very low income" to refer to both "up to 50% of median income" and "up to 30% of median income". The correct term for "up to 30% of median income" is "extremely low income" as shown in ***bold italic underscored*** below:

There are state income limits based on the county median income for each family size and number of bedrooms for moderate income (up to 120% of median income), low income (up to 80% of median income), very low income (up to 50% of median income), and ***extremely*** low income (up to 30% of median income).

---

**From:** herb <herb\_borock@hotmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, November 23, 2023 12:43 AM

**To:** city.council@cityofpaloalto.org <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>; city.clerk@cityofpaloalto.org <city.clerk@cityofpaloalto.org>

**Subject:** November 27, 2023 Council Meeting, Item #16: Residential Rental Unit Registry Program

### **NOVEMBER 27, 2023 CITY COUNCIL MEETING, AGENDA ITEM #16**

#### **RESIDENTIAL RENTAL UNIT REGISTRY PROGRAM**

I urge you to reject this proposal because such a program is properly used to help implement a rent stabilization ordinance rather than as a data collection exercise.

Should you decide to adopt a registry program at this time, I suggest that it exempt all residential rental properties with four residential units or less [with each Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) counted as a residential unit], where one of the residential units on the property is occupied by the property owner as the property owner's legal residence.

The data you collect would be subject to the Public Records Act, and in the absence of a rent stabilization ordinance would invite anybody with a higher income to offer a higher rent for a unit when its current lease expires and thereby displace a lower-income resident.

If you are truly interested in data collection, then I suggest you direct staff to (1) use available census data and the existing record of subsidized rental units and the few below-market rate rentals to show the tables of data for unit size and each of the state income limits for subsidized housing, and for each table show how many of the units are subsidized or BMR

units that already have rent limits; and (2) to show the number of ADU and JADU rentals and how many of each already have restricted rents.

There are state income limits based on the county median income for each family size and number of bedrooms for moderate income (up to 120% of median income), low income (up to 80% of median income), very low income (up to 50% of median income), and very low income (up to 30% of median income).

The staff's proposal simply creates a reason for a large organized group of landlords to circulate a referendum petition to require you to either reverse your approval or to place the issue on the ballot.

You have heard a lot recently about how Peter Drekmeier, Walt Hays, and Bob Wenzlau qualified an initiative measure for the ballot by collecting the valid signatures of 12% of the registered voters in about five months for Measure E.

A motivated group of citizens can collect the required 12% valid signatures for a special election in a much shorter period of time after accounting of a larger number of invalid signatures than Measure E.

I know that because in 1978 after the passage of Proposition 13 when tenants found out the promises made by landlords were not true, I was asked to coordinate a rent stabilization ordinance in Palo Alto that collected the required 12% valid signatures of registered voters in three-and-a-half weeks in the summer by collecting a total number of raw signatures of which only 75% were valid.

Herb Borock

**From:** [herb](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#); [Clerk, City](#)  
**Subject:** November 27, 2023 Council Meeting, Item #16: Residential Rental Unit Registry Program  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 22, 2023 4:43:24 PM

---

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

---

**NOVEMBER 27, 2023 CITY COUNCIL MEETING, AGENDA ITEM #16**

**RESIDENTIAL RENTAL UNIT REGISTRY PROGRAM**

I urge you to reject this proposal because such a program is properly used to help implement a rent stabilization ordinance rather than as a data collection exercise.

Should you decide to adopt a registry program at this time, I suggest that it exempt all residential rental properties with four residential units or less [with each Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) counted as a residential unit], where one of the residential units on the property is occupied by the property owner as the property owner's legal residence.

The data you collect would be subject to the Public Records Act, and in the absence of a rent stabilization ordinance would invite anybody with a higher income to offer a higher rent for a unit when its current lease expires and thereby displace a lower-income resident.

If you are truly interested in data collection, then I suggest you direct staff to (1) use available census data and the existing record of subsidized rental units and the few below-market rate rentals to show the tables of data for unit size and each of the state income limits for subsidized housing, and for each table show how many of the units are subsidized or BMR units that already have rent limits; and (2) to show the number of ADU and JADU rentals and how many of each already have restricted rents.

There are state income limits based on the county median income for each family size and number of bedrooms for moderate income (up to 120% of median income), low income (up to 80% of median income), very low income (up to 50% of median income), and very low income (up to 30% of median income).

The staff's proposal simply creates a reason for a large organized group of landlords to circulate a referendum petition to require you to either reverse your approval or to place the issue on the ballot.

You have heard a lot recently about how Peter Drekmeier, Walt Hays, and Bob Wenzlau qualified an initiative measure for the ballot by collecting the valid signatures of 12% of the registered voters in about five months for Measure E.

A motivated group of citizens can collect the required 12% valid signatures for a special election in a much shorter period of time after accounting of a larger number of invalid signatures than Measure E.

I know that because in 1978 after the passage of Proposition 13 when tenants found out the promises made by landlords were not true, I was asked to coordinate a rent stabilization ordinance in Palo Alto that collected the required 12% valid signatures of registered voters in three-and-a-half weeks in the summer by collecting a total number of raw signatures of which only 75% were valid.

Herb Borock