

## **Take Action in L.A. County!**

### **Sample letter for L.A. County Board of Supervisors:**

*Dear County Board of Supervisors:*

*Thank you for implementing some of the suggestions that AOA made back in August. Over the duration of the moratorium, 985+ days, inflation has exceeded the 7.5% increase in the proposed revision. So, if you can prove inflation, then you can claim COVID hardship? You are insulting the intelligence of all of us.*

***Solution:*** *Limit “increased costs” strictly to medical-related expenses. This number should be a number large enough to impact the ability to pay rent. The amount of COVID-protected rent debt should not exceed the total amount of additional medical expenses.*

*Inflation and COVID are two separate issues, although both issues impacted owners and renters. When “financial hardship” is used, it refers to medical bills, unforeseen childcare expenses, or other expenses due to COVID - not gas and groceries. The way this is written continues to enable tenants to commit fraud. Shouldn’t these protections be reserved for genuine cases?*

*With the way this is written, a 10% decrease in income is also vague. That should be a percentage decrease related to each specific month that COVID hardship is claimed. You need to make this very clear. It has not been clarified!*

***Solution:*** *Set a limit to the amount of COVID protected rent debt to the difference between 2019 tax reported income and the average of reported income from 2020 and 2021. If there was no decrease in reported income, then there is no COVID hardship protection. Or, if only declaring COVID hardship in 2021, then the difference between 2019’s reported income and 2021’s reported income should be considered. Again, if there is no decrease, there is no COVID hardship protection. If there is a \$1,000 decrease, then that amount only should fall under COVID hardship protection.*

*With the burden to prove financial hardship, the COVID Hardship Declaration form utilized by the county needs revision. It is vague. It needs to be made easier to indicate the extent of the protection requested.*

***Solution:*** *Please refer to the proposed revisions to the Basis for COVID Hardship Declaration Form that AOA submitted to you back in August.*

*AOA also suggested that a mechanism be created to provide consent to the rental property owner for third-party verification of financial information, to prove COVID-related hardship. We live in the modern era, where Photoshop can be used to edit bank statements. Without the ability to look at credit lines and bank accounts through a third party, this will be another area where fraud will be committed.*

***Solution:*** *Original tax documents should be required to show previous and current income rates. Please recognize that there are a large number of tenants that are committing fraudulent COVID hardship declarations.*

*In the case of additional unauthorized occupants, you're encouraging a free-ride for some tenants. It's usually a \$100 charge for an extra tenant. If you wanted to protect them from eviction, that's one thing, but they shouldn't get a free ride. There are utility costs and wear and tear on the property.*

***Solution:*** *Require additional unauthorized occupants to prove COVID hardship. If they cannot prove COVID hardship, then they should not be protected from eviction.*

*Thank you for your time and consideration,*

*Your Name*

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You can either email the Board of Supervisors or you can post a public comment:

[Copy and paste your public comment for the L.A. County Board of Supervisors here.](#)

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