

Just weeks ago a rent control bill died in the Senate. Known as SB 184 (Leno), the bill would have permitted every city and county to set price controls on newly constructed rental and ownership housing.

Lobbying the bill was intensive, focused and hard fought.

SB 184 was supported by no less than an alliance of 70 well-organized groups. Rent control boards, major cities, the League of California Cities, low-income housing advocates, tenants rights associations, SCANPH, Housing Long Beach, and the Greater Long Beach Interfaith Community Organization were part of the coalition of strong support.

We met with every Senator who was likely to vote NO. When the vote was tallied, every Republican voted against the bill and all but one moderate Democrat either voted NO or abstained from voting.

In the end, the bill failed. The author needed 21 votes and only received 17.

In addition, we are very pleased that AB 265 (Ammiano) did not move off the Assembly floor. The bill would have permitted a tenant that did not pay rent to remain in the rental unit OR regain possession of the dwelling as long as he or she paid the past due rent and up to \$350.00 legal fees.

Can you imagine, a tenant that moved out of your rental unit walking up to you one day and paying the rent and the de minimus legal costs and state, "I'm ready to move back into my apartment?"

AB 265 was remarkably bad for many reasons:

Rent that is usually due on the first of the month would become moot because tenants would be permitted to pay rent much later if Ammiano's bill becomes law.

The sponsors of the bill, Tenants United, offered little reason to eliminate current law that requires proof of hardship for delaying rent payments or reinstating tenancy. They argued . . . tenants need more time to pay rent and they should not be required to prove any hardship to anyone.

Tenants that are habitually late in the payment of rent would really take advantage of AB 265 because the bill would permit them to, without any reason, pay rent until lockout without explanation.

## Apartment Association, California Southern Cities, Inc. - SB 653, Bargaining Chip

Written by Ron Kingston

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The bill would frustrate unlawful detainer actions. Landlords would never know if a tenant would pay the back due rent. Tenants would not need to answer an unlawful detainer complaint and appear in court! How frustrating is that?

We would not be able to enter into new rental agreements in a timely manner because we would not know the rental availability status of the unit should this scenario arise.

Also, the Senate recently approved a bill that would give counties and local school districts more power to seek tax increases on their own than ever before.

President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, who authored the bill stated "One way or another, we're going to provide the opportunity for those institutions (counties and school districts) and those public servants to do their jobs and serve our kids... we mean business, and take our responsibility very seriously to provide the (financial) resources to schools and people who risk their lives in uniforms."

The terms of the bill were originally written in SB 653, which became a significant bargaining chip in the state budget process as the Governor and majority Democrats sought support from Republicans for an agreement that includes extending temporary tax rates. Democrats want the Republicans to agree to maintain the higher tax rates for up to a year and let the voters decide at a later date whether to approve the taxes for a longer period of time.

The bill would permit the counties and school districts to place measures on the ballot to fund schools and counties through a variety of tax hikes including: local income taxes, sales taxes, vehicle license fees, levies on liquor, tobacco and soft drinks, oil production AND transaction taxes... INCLUDING REAL ESTATE TRANSACTION TAXES SUCH AS A TAX ON RENT.

The bill is viewed by all as a bargaining chip. As the deadline nears to approve a state budget, SB 23 may become a reality or a dead issue for the year.

AACSC will continue to vehemently oppose the bill, in large part because it is much easier for the electorate to approve a tax measure that is perceived to tax someone else such as a tax on landlords than a tax on everyone in the community.