

# STUDENTS FOR FAIR HOUSING

Andy Kim, Anthony Phan, Emily  
Zimmerman, Trevor Modesto  
Social Action 164



# OVERVIEW: THE RIGHT TO COUNSEL

At its very basics, the right to counsel is the right to have legal representation in the case of an eviction proceeding. Think about a guaranteed lawyer in criminal cases.



# ISSUE IDENTIFICATION: SACRED HEART CHECKLIST

## **Widely felt?**

↳ What we learned from other orgs and tabling

## **Deeply felt?**

↳ What we learned from alliance meetings

## **Winnable in a year?**

## **Will it grow our base?**

## **Meaningful change?**

↳ A drop in the bucket in the grand scheme, but still meaningful in how it can help people

↳ EX: San Francisco

## **Opportunities for leadership development?**

# ISSUE IDENTIFICATION: CONNECTING WITH OTHER ORGS



Kenneth Trejada and Dorothy Hwang

- Learned that leading cause of evictions is from rent
- Attorneys can only do so much
- Important to realize the cultural and linguistic barriers for our program, especially in San Jose
- Focus on how to make residents trust your program
- All organizations are connected



Sandy Perry

- Framing our issue as a right of housing
- Making the issue known to city council through protests to push the goal further
- Make the issue a political issue rather than a personal issue



- Learned about the importance of the power of organizing the people
- People have opinions and stories, but need the voice
- Importance of language inclusivity



Andrea Urton

- The housing issue is complicated and people are evicted for many reasons
- Homelessness is usually from within the neighborhood, homelessness as a demonized topic
- RTC as a preemptive measure



Deepa Varma

- RTC as a cost-preventative measure
- RTC helps everyone, not just low-income renters



DESTINATION: HOME

Ray Branson

- SJ and other cities already have programs to help with eviction
- Would be good to do research on these programs and other cities' eviction programs

# ISSUE IDENTIFICATION: FRAMING OUR ISSUE

HOW DO WE FRAME OUR CAMPAIGN TO GET  
THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE?

Fairness

Equality

Housing as a  
human right

Relatability

Legacy for  
our children

Putting  
people  
first

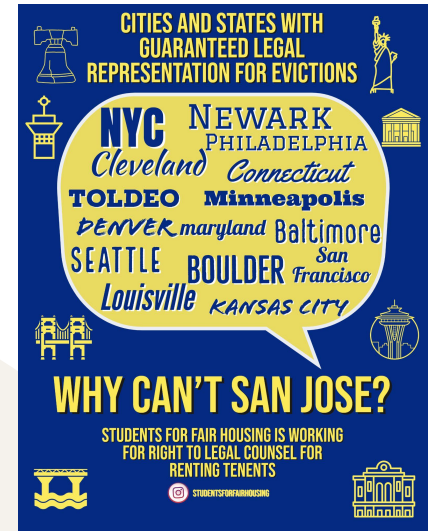
Housing as a  
foundation for  
health

Interdependence  
No one person is an island

# OUR ISSUE, NOT RADICAL

Important step:

- Realizing that it has been done before
  - 16 other cities and states have their own RTC
- Relate to criminal court cases and guaranteed legal representation
- Provided opportunity to connect with another student group doing the same thing
  - Lynx Initiative for Equitable Housing
  - Student group in Tennessee
  - Provided relief and relatability that other students and states were involved in RTC
  - We had more info, but were happy to help and share our resources



# RESEARCH: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

**Overview:** Historical analysis uncovered key, decisive factors for campaign direction

- Implementation
  - Generally funded under ARPA, ERAP, excise tax on rental units
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
  - Extremely low-cost homelessness intervention/prevention
  - Saves ~double what it costs in associated programs (medicaid, education, transportation, homelessness services)
- RTC is a multi-year process even in favorable conditions
  - 6-8 year process in SF even after city-issued ordinance declaring intent

**Specific findings:** RTC works, plain and simple

- In SF, 70% of tenants retain unit, 80% for Black tenants
- Court cases decrease by 10% every fiscal year
- Should not be means-tested
  - Saves time, resources, still majority utilized by LI and ELI tenants
  -



# RESEARCH: TARGET ANALYSIS

## Target Analysis for S4FH



**Cindy Chavez**  
Mayoral Candidate

- Has stated support for Right to Counsel
- Campaign is focused on difference of experience between her and Mahan
- Questionable campaign donors



**Omar Torres**  
District 3

- Very involved in housing issues
- Wants to create supportive housing program for unhoused families
- Cares about marginalized groups and identities



**Sergio Jimenez**  
District 2

- Expanded SOAR to combat homelessness, eviction, and displacement
- Pro-tenant voting history



**Maya Esparza**  
District 7

- Cares about civic engagement from community
- Good pro-tenant voting history
- Led "All the Way Home" to fight veteran homelessness



**Sylvia Arenas**  
District 8/BoS

- Currently running for Board of Supervisors
- Deeply involved in women's rights, education, and Latinx community
- Mixed tenant/housing history



**Matt Mahan**  
District 10,  
Mayoral

- Currently running for Mayor of SJ
- Tech company startup CEO
- Believes current policies to be ineffective
- Proposes private solutions such as tiny homes

# RESEARCH: POWER ANALYSIS AND POWER MAP

	For	Possibly for	Neutral/ Unsure	Possibly against	Against
Mayoral				-Matt Mahan -Chappie Jones	
Board of Supervisors		-Sylvia Arenas			
City Council	-Omar Torres	-Sergio Jimenez -Peter Ortiz	-Pam Foley -David Cohen	-Dev Davis -Bien Doan	
Organizations	-Sacred Heart -Affordable Housing Network of Santa Clara -Asian Law Alliance -Destination: Home -HomeFirst Services -The National Coalition for RTC -The SF RTC Committee -Raul Peralez/Staff	-Project Sentinel -SOMOS Mayfair -The Bay Area Law Foundation -The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley -The SF Tenants Union -SF Democratic Socialists of America -The Eviction Defense Collaborative			

# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES: WEEKLY SHHAC MEETINGS

- Sacred Heart Housing Action Committee weekly meetings were a time to debrief, network, receive mentorship, and plan campaign moves with more experienced community organizers
- Entitled us to many Sacred Heart/SHHAC resources
- Sacred Heart is well known in community, opened doors for meetings, provided warm introduction
- Provided another venue to develop leadership and group dynamic skills
  - Agenda planning, facilitation, note-taking, delegation
  - Delegation and facilitation important:
    - We got involved in many planning meetings, exposed to different areas of our government
    - Learned how to facilitate meeting where everyone is included



# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES: FLYERS

## STUDENTS FOR FAIR HOUSING (S4FH)

San Jose is one of the most expensive cities to live in. Santa Clara County had the most evictions in the bay area during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Half of the evictions were done illegally. Renters are tricked into leaving their homes through informal notices.

8% of renters have lawyers to fight eviction proceedings. 81% of landlords have lawyers to push the proceedings.

We have the right to legal representation for other matters, why don't we have the same mindset for evictions?

### STUDENTS FOR FAIR HOUSING (S4FH)

is fighting for guaranteed legal representation for tenants facing eviction. Become involved.

STUDENTSFORFAIRHOUSING

## The Conversation Behind Right to Counsel

Eviction filing rates in my city fell because of RTC

I remained housed because I was represented

I didn't have to involuntarily move my entire life

I don't know fluent English but I was able to defend my rights

I didn't know I had rights when I was evicted

### Where's the conversation in San José?

Students for Fair Housing demands the right to counsel for families facing eviction. Have your voice heard.

IG: Studentsforfairhousing

## HOUSING IN SAN JOSE: DID YOU KNOW?

**59%** Percent of renters who remain in their homes - where they belong - after being represented by a lawyer in court

**70%** Percent of people who reach a favorable financial settlement with legal representation, keeping their families from becoming homeless

**1/2** of the evictions processed in Santa Clara county during the pandemic happened illegally

Mothers who suffer eviction significantly more likely to face

Depression and anxiety  
Parental Stress  
Marital Hardship  
Worsened Physical health

The rate at which landlords are represented in court vs. their tenants

Number of Americans evicted per minute in 2018

Black renters, and especially black women are twice as likely to face eviction than other racial demographics

Guaranteed legal assistance for families facing eviction is FAIR, EQUITABLE, and leads to better long-term mental and physical health outcomes for entire families

Students for Fair Housing (S4FH) is working to provide a solution!



## CITIES AND STATES WITH GUARANTEED LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR EVICTIONS

NYC NEWARK PHILADELPHIA  
Cleveland Connecticut  
TOLDEO Minneapolis  
DENVER maryland Baltimore  
SEATTLE BOULDER San Francisco  
Louisville KANSAS CITY

### WHY CAN'T SAN JOSE?

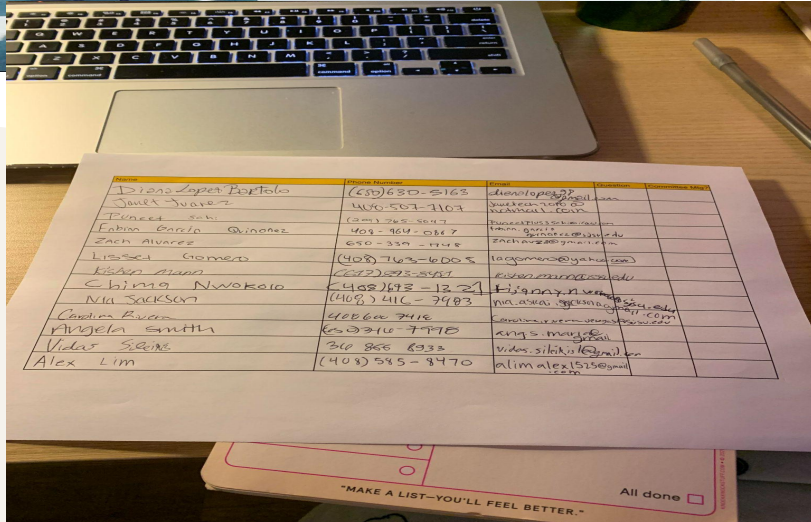
STUDENTS FOR FAIR HOUSING IS WORKING FOR RIGHT TO LEGAL COUNSEL FOR RENTING TENANTS

IG: STUDENTSFORFAIRHOUSING

# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES: TABLING



- Great opportunity to network with students and other student organizations
- Pleasantly surprised by amount of walk ups, interest in our campaign
- Used QR code for immediate social media following, commitment cards to quickly engage student body in our work, one-on-ones to follow up for further engagement
- Tablings proved issue is widely and deeply felt (from Sacred Heart Organizing checklist)
- Connected with students after tabling to give them options to be involved with us



# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES: RTC WORKSHOP

(Whatever that racial justice conference was called)

Workshop agenda:

- Intro activity
- Kahoot
- Visuals/Going deeper on the problem
- Testimony
- Introduce right to counsel
- How to get involved
- Call to action

STUDENTS FOR FAIR HOUSING PRESENTS

## Y'ALL BETTER CALL SAUL:

**WHY TENANTS NEED THE RIGHT TO LEGAL COUNSEL IN EVICTIONS**

**A WORKSHOP ON BRINGING RIGHT TO COUNSEL TO SAN JOSE**

**LEARN ABOUT:**

WHAT: IS RACIAL HOUSING INEQUALITY

WHO: IS MOST AFFECTED BY RACE AND INCOME

WHY: ONLY 3% OF TENANTS HAVE A LAWYER TO PROTECT THEIR HOUSING

WHEN: DID SAN JOSE SUFFER **3,600 EVICTIONS**

HOW: YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

THURSDAY NOV 10, 2022 - 5PM - 6PM  
CREATV SAN JOSE, 38 S SECOND ST, SAN JOSE 95113  
FOOD AND GAMES INCLUDED!



# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES: SACRED HEART ORGANIZING INSTITUTE WORKSHOP

- Issue identification seminar
  - Issue identification checklist
  - Valuable feedback from other community organizations, law foundations
  - Law foundations skeptical, as expected
  - Helped us see the weak points in our campaign and arguments
    - Showed us areas to improve, counter arguments to devise
    - Education and outreach is key for RTC
      - Overcoming institutional barriers, distrust, ESL barrier, not knowing one's rights



# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY: COPA PRESENTATION

COPA = Community Opportunity to Purchase Act

- Opportunity to share our issues and demand with wider group of similarly aligned tenants rights organizations
- COPA working group & other tenants rights organizations favorable to our campaign, found partner and allyship
- Invited SOMOS Mayfair and affiliates to our Jan 10th city hall action
- RTC, along with COPA, are two rich anti-displacement strategies that are stronger when paired together



# CAMPAIGN ACTION #1: TARGET MEETING WITH PETER ALLEN

- Originally Raul Peralez, met with Communication Coordinator instead
- Helped powermap and devise strategy
  - Focus on 6 members that can be convinced
  - Campaign through case studies, suggestions, and working alongside the Housing Department
- Offered warm introductions to Torres, Ortiz, and Jimenez' offices
- Helped us decide to target city instead of county
  - City laws trump county laws; already have 6 favorable city council targets
  - As SJ goes, so goes SC county (SJ is >50% SC county)
- Discussed implementation, funding
  - Not housed in city attorney office, lack of resources/bandwidth
  - Contracting legal NGOs (BALA, LFSV)



\*Photoshopped beard for realism

# CAMPAIGN ACTION #2: JANUARY 10TH CITY HALL

Planned press conference at City Hall on January 10th

- Officially launching our campaign and directing it toward our selected councilmembers
- First meeting of the newly elected council members
  - Special occasion where there will be only 9 members (for now)
- Organizing our strength through solidarity with other organizations
  - SOMOS Mayfair
  - Asian Law Alliance
  - Destination:Home
  - Housing Department
- Recruiting paying off: Asking all of our members and recruitment to attend, numbers = power
- Inviting the press to attend the event
  - San Jose Spotlight (Important because local)
  - PBS (600k viewers)
  - ABC 7, NBC



# GROUP DYNAMICS AND LEADERSHIP MODEL

- Positive regard and understanding go a LONG way toward harmony
- Democratic, decentralized “leader-full” leadership
  - Everyone gets to share, feels heard- consensus decision making is best
  - If the same one or two people are speaking most of the time at debriefs it may be a sign that the work is being unevenly distributed
- Culture of accountability:
  - Personal responsibility and initiative, delegation, asking for help, updating your groupmates as frequently as possible
- Rotating facilitation, note-taking, and vibes-checking ensures everyone develops leadership and listening skills, promotes engagement, prevents stagnation of roles
- Don't be afraid to try new things, offer suggestions, make a mistake, show vulnerability



# LESSONS LEARNED/HOW WE GOT OUT OF THE CAVE

- Midterm election year made target analysis & power mapping difficult
- Struggled to grow base, focused more on allyship & powerbuilding with other community organizations. Future iterations should take our depth of research & alliance building, focus on growing S4FH base and recruitment
- Found 6 favorable city council members to focus efforts on
- RESEARCH IS KEY

When leaving the cave, keep in mind that...

We're all just ordinary people who believe it's our responsibility to do something about the injustices we see in our communities.

Everyone possesses leadership qualities in their own ways:

- Encouragement
- Nurturance
- Personal Responsibility
- Initiative

