



OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Ben Rosenfield
Controller
Todd Rydstrom
Deputy Controller

Mr. John Arntz
Department of Elections
City Hall 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

March 12, 2018

RE: Proposition F - Ordinance establishing a program to provide legal representation to all residential tenants facing eviction lawsuits

Dear Mr. Arntz,

The cost of the proposed ordinance, should it be approved by the voters, is dependent on decisions that the Mayor and Board of Supervisors make through the budget process, as an ordinance cannot bind future Mayors and Boards of Supervisors to provide funding for this or any other purpose. In my opinion, the cost of fully funding the program created in the proposed measure, should future policymakers do so, is likely to be significant.

The measure establishes a City program to provide full legal representation to residential tenants in eviction proceedings. Depending on the number of cases and other factors, the program would increase the City's program costs by between approximately \$4.2 million and approximately \$5.6 million annually, and this amount would be likely to grow in future years.

The measure would require that the City establish a program to provide full legal representation for all residential tenants in San Francisco facing eviction. Currently, the City provides some services available to all tenants, including no-cost tenant counseling and tenant's rights education, and no-cost or low-cost basic legal services. Annual City spending on tenant counseling, education, outreach and eviction-related basic legal services is approximately \$4.4 million. The City also provides no-cost full legal representation in eviction proceedings for a limited number of eligible tenants under certain criteria including age, income and health status. Annual City spending on eviction-related full legal representation is approximately \$2.0 million.

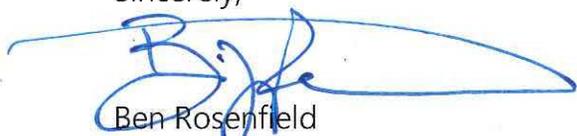
Data from the San Francisco Superior Court and other local data sources show that approximately 3,500 tenants annually would be eligible for full legal representation under the program. However, not all tenants would use these services, and the extent of the legal representation required would vary from case to case. These and other factors result in a range of estimated annual program costs of between \$4.2 million and \$5.6 million.

Counseling, tenant education and eviction-related legal services are primarily provided through contracts between the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) and non-profit community-based organizations. In addition to the program costs above, MOHCD would require added staffing for implementation of the program, estimated at \$200,000 annually.

Some studies suggest that there are also cost savings associated with universal access to civil legal services, including eviction defense. Services that keep tenants in their homes help reduce or prevent costs in other publicly-funded service systems, such as shelters and other homeless services.

As stated above, an ordinance cannot bind future Mayors and Boards of Supervisors to provide funding for this or any other purpose. Under the City Charter, the ultimate cost of this proposal depends on decisions made in the City’s annual budget process.

Sincerely,



Ben Rosenfield
Controller

Note: This analysis reflects our understanding of the proposal as of the date shown. At times further information is provided to us which may result in revisions being made to this analysis before the final Controller’s statement appears in the Voter Information Pamphlet