

Robles, Sandra

From: Anthony Manousos <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 11:42 AM
To: Robles, Sandra
Subject: Support for prioritizing displaced residents for affordable housing

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Dear Ed Tech Committee members,

I am proud and happy to be a resident of Northwest Pasadena, one of the most vibrant and diverse areas of our city. But I am also keenly aware that this area has dramatically changed due to gentrification and many of my African American neighbors have left. That's why I support the recommendation that displaced residents of Pasadena be given top priority for affordable housing.

Let me share a personal story that helps explain why I am so concerned. Ten years ago, when I first moved to this city, I attended the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast and hear a young African American woman sing so beautifully she deeply touched my heart. I was privileged to be seated next to her and when I complimented her, she responded sadly and with some bitterness that she was born in Pasadena, and works in the city, but can no longer afford to live her. What a terrible loss, I thought, not just for her but for our city! I have since met others like her.

As I researched housing justice issues in our city, I learned the the Black population in Pasadena has dropped 24% in the last 10 years. Those who are displaced still have friends and family in Pasadena, and often commute long distances to visit, thereby increasing traffic. Many Black churches have become "commuter churches" with pastors and members commuting long distance to take part. This weakens the social fabric of neighborhoods where churches have historically played an important role.

I also learned that racial and ethnic diversity is part of the vision for our city. Prioritizing displaced residents would help reweave the social fabric of our city and build long-term neighborhood stability. Let me conclude by quoting our city's powerful and beautiful vision as expressed in the most recent Housing Element:

"All Pasadena residents have an equal right to live in decent, safe and affordable housing in a suitable living environment for the long-term well-being and stability of themselves, their families, their neighborhoods, and their community. The housing vision for Pasadena is to maintain a socially and economically diverse community of homeowners and renters who are afforded this right" (Housing Element, p. 1).

Anthony Manousos