



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Controller Kenneth Mejia Releases Audit of Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO) Implementation, Finds Program To Be Inadequately Serviced and Ineffective**

*Controller Mejia Urges Housing Department and City Council to Strengthen TAHO Program to Hold Landlords Accountable for Harassment and Prevent Harassment*

LOS ANGELES – The Office of City Controller Kenneth Mejia today released an audit of the City’s implementation of the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO). TAHO is a City law that prohibits landlords from harassing tenants (e.g., making threats, reducing housing services, withholding repairs). It is implemented mainly by the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD).

**Full audit:**  
**[bit.ly/taho-audit](https://bit.ly/taho-audit)**

TAHO was passed in June 2021, and the City began taking complaints for it in February 2022. During the audit’s scope period of August 2021 through December 2023, LAHD received well over 10,000 TAHO complaints.

The Controller’s Office’s aim was to evaluate the implementation of TAHO and determine whether TAHO was achieving its goals of protecting tenants and holding landlords accountable.

**The audit found that overall, the TAHO program was not effectively designed, resourced, or implemented.**

Significant issues were found that indicate **the City is neither achieving its goal of holding landlords who harass their tenants accountable, nor deterring future instances of harassment.**

**The TAHO program was so ineffective that 72% of respondents to our audit survey (comprised of tenants who had recently submitted a TAHO complaint) reported that their landlord continued to harass them even after their TAHO case was closed.**

In one case, a tenant reported a landlord regularly threatened her, including demanding that she and her family move out or else the landlord would “move them out in a casket.” The City’s response consisted of sending the landlord an informational letter explaining TAHO, advising the tenant to get a lawyer, and closing the case.

Controller Mejia said, “Our audit found that the City has not set TAHO up for success, and therefore TAHO has not been able to protect people from harassment by landlords. The City of LA must take tenant harassment seriously and strengthen the TAHO program. Providing adequate resources to the TAHO program will ensure that people are safe in their own homes and are able to stay housed.

“Not only does harassment from landlords harm individuals, it also harms everyone in the City by displacing people from housing and exacerbating the homelessness crisis. An improved TAHO program is vital to the City’s future.”

#### **Key findings:**

- **72%** of respondents to our audit survey (tenants who had recently submitted TAHO complaints) reported that their landlord **continued to harass** them even after their TAHO case was closed.
- LAHD has **not** provided its housing investigators with **adequate guidance** for managing TAHO complaints.
- **Inadequate staffing and resources** have limited LAHD’s ability to carry out investigations and enforcement of TAHO.
- LAHD’s **ability to enforce** TAHO has mainly consisted of **sending educational letters** to offending landlords. For enforcement beyond that, it has **heavily relied on the City Attorney’s Office**.

#### **Additional findings:**

- **There were 10,968 TAHO complaints** submitted to LAHD between February 2022 and December 2023.
  - As of July 2024, **only 23 TAHO complaints** were referred to the City Attorney’s Office for enforcement beyond sending an educational letter.
    - Only 4 citations (non-criminal administrative) were issued.
    - Only 4 cases were referred for alternative resolution proceedings.
    - All other cases are either under review for potential criminal filings, or have been rejected from prosecution.
- LAHD’s Rent Division, the division responsible for implementing TAHO, **initially did not receive any funding or dedicated staff** to implement TAHO.
- LAHD **has not established clear guidelines for determining whether a TAHO violation has occurred**.
- LAHD **has not established formal policies or procedures** for conducting TAHO investigations.
- LAHD **did not provide its housing investigators with sufficient training** on how to conduct TAHO investigations.
- Based on a review of a **sample** of TAHO cases, the Controller’s Office found that **only 21% of complaints resulted in a complete investigation**.
- **Case outcome data is not standardized**, so case outcomes cannot be accurately tracked.

- A **survey** conducted by the Controller’s Office showed that LAHD’s **efforts to address harassment by landlords** has **not been effective**:
  - **72%** of respondents to our audit survey reported their landlords were **continuing to harass** them even **after** TAHO cases were reported, investigated, and closed.
  - **41%** of tenants reported that **LAHD did not clearly communicate what evidence was needed** to substantiate a harassment allegation.
  - **50%** of tenants were **unsure of the outcome** of their TAHO case.
  - Tenants were **confused** by LAHD’s TAHO **investigation process**.

**Recommendations:**

In November 2024, the City Council approved revisions intended to strengthen TAHO and address some of the law’s initial flaws. Those changes included:

- Guaranteeing attorneys’ fees for prevailing tenants;
- Establishing a minimum civil penalty, and
- Requiring that prevailing tenants be awarded three times (3x) the amount of the determined compensatory damages.

Controller Mejia said of these revisions, “While these are a positive step, the updates to the ordinance do not address the underlying flaws in the City’s administration and enforcement of TAHO. The City should consider additional updates to the ordinance to further enhance tenant protections.”

The Controller’s recommendations include:

- The City should assess the feasibility of revising TAHO to provide LAHD with the authority to independently issue **administrative citations and fines** in response to identified violations of the law.
- The City should assess the feasibility of **increasing citation fine amounts** for TAHO violations.
- City Council should consider amending TAHO language to **increase the maximum civil penalty amount** for TAHO violations.
- City Council should consider amending TAHO language to **guarantee** the awarding of **additional civil penalties** to prevailing tenants that are **older than 65** or that have **disabilities**.
- LAHD should **establish formal policies and procedures** for managing TAHO cases.
- LAHD should **provide formal training** on TAHO for housing investigators.
- LAHD should **hire additional housing investigators** to conduct TAHO investigations.
- LAHD should **develop a tracking and enforcement protocol** that will allow the department to **identify and track rental units which become vacant due to confirmed violations of TAHO**.

“By following our recommendations, the City will set TAHO up for success and provide much-needed protection to renters,” Controller Mejia said.

Audits and Assessments by City Controller Kenneth Mejia's Office

Completed:

- TAHO
- [Pathways to Permanent Housing](#)
- [LAPD Military Equipment](#)
- [LAPD Helicopters](#)
- [Interim Housing](#)

In progress:

- CARE/CARE+
- Unarmed Response
- Affordable Housing Efforts