



Rent-Free in Oakland

April 24, 2023

The city council of Oakland, California just [voted 7-1](#) to end the town’s pandemic-rationalized moratorium on eviction for nonpayment of rent.

But it’s not over yet.

The moratorium will linger on until July 15. Three years is supposedly insufficient time for tenants to gird themselves to again honor the contract with the persons who provide them with shelter.

And then it still won’t be over.

The council’s slow-walk phaseout comes with a permanent new limitation on what landlords can do.

This explains the lone dissenting vote, that of Council member Noel Gallo, who says that the rights of landlords are still being insufficiently protected.

As the [text of the legislation](#) passed by the council makes clear, its revision of the city’s “just cause” ordinance further violates the property rights of landlords. In part, the new ordinance provides that any failure to pay rent during the last three years which a tenant can plausibly attribute to the pandemic is sufficient to prevent an eviction, even if not relieving the tenant of the obligation to pay that rent.

Will the reprieve be too late and too little for [property owners like John Williams](#)? For the last three years, Williams has been stuck with a freeloading tenant who has been financially able to pay rent but who has refused to do so and refused to move.

The tenant, occupying half of the duplex where he also happens to live, owes him \$56,000. And Williams is facing . . . foreclosure.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.