

Tenants, advocates rally against unsafe conditions in Fresno rentals

By Carmen George



Attendees at a rally advocating for safe, clean conditions in Fresno rentals, held Thursday, April 9 outside City Hall. CARMEN GEORGE — THE FRESNO BEE

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A coalition of tenants and housing advocates gathered outside Fresno City Hall on Thursday to demand greater protections for renters. The group is calling for stronger enforcement of habitability laws and a new ordinance that would require units to be fit to rent before tenants move in.

The group said about half of Fresno’s population are renters.

Fresno tenant Randina Elias said her children live in unsafe conditions. She moved into an apartment with exposed nails in the carpet, a leak in her bathroom ceiling, windows nailed shut, and no hot water.

“Living in these conditions hurts me and my family,” Elias said.

Thursday’s rally, attended by about 60 people, was sponsored by Faith in Community, Lowell Community Development Corporation, Housing Alliance of Fresno, Planned Parenthood, Fresno Partnership, Laborers Local 294, Fresno Metro Ministry, No More Slumlords and Tenants Together.



“We are asking the city to do its part to make sure every tenant in Fresno lives in safe, secure housing that complies with habitability laws,” said Andy Levine, executive director of Faith in Community.

Simone Cranston-Rhodes, regional organizer for Tenants Together, said Fresno’s city government has failed to protect renters, who have been “ignored for too long.”

Leah Simon-Weisberg, legal director of Tenants Together, said the city should be suing a number of landlords and rental companies. “How many more generations of children have to grow up in these deplorable conditions before the city requires landlords to comply with the law?”

The coalition is pushing for the following changes:

The Fresno City Council should prevent people from advertising substandard units for rent. “For rent” signs should not be posted until the unit is ready for people to move in.

Code enforcement should increase inspections of units for rent. Fresno needs a routine inspection program to make sure all rental units are inspected periodically.

The city attorney needs to file suit against landlords and companies that refuse to make repairs.

Tenants with questions about their rights can attend Tenants Together’s next monthly tenant rights clinic at 5:30 p.m. April 16 at Dickey Youth Center, 1515 E. Divisadero St., Fresno.

This story will be updated.

Contact Carmen George: cgeorge@fresnobee.com, (559) 441-6386 or [@CarmenGeorge](https://twitter.com/CarmenGeorge) on Twitter.