

## Letter to the Editor...



(The below letter was written to the LA Times regarding Prop 98.)

*Regarding your recommendation for a "NO" vote on Prop 98, there are several points with which I take issue. You state that including the abolishment of rent control in this proposition is cynical and devious. If you want cynical and devious, look to the highest offices in Washington, not at average apartment building owners. Certainly, we desire to eliminate the private to private eminent domain activities being pushed by developers and certain politicians (the only ones benefiting).*

*One only need look to the deleterious effects of rent control in New York to see the result. Because landlords were denied adequate revenue to maintain many of their buildings, they had to walk away from them resulting in total vacancies in their very large buildings followed by massive vandalism thereby reducing the available housing stocks.*

*Under rent control, we are permitted to raise our rents 3% this year, while water rates increased a minimum of 30% and insurance 300% (no claims). Notice they are not under the same constraints as landlords. How are these increases to be recovered with a 3% rental rate increase?*

*Years ago when apartments were overbuilt and there were thousands of vacancies, landlords were forced to offer incentives to attract tenants. For example, six months free rent in exchange for a one year lease. No government agency stepped in to help. Landlords were governed by forces of the free market and had to deal with it. Accordingly, if rent control were to be eliminated, these same free market forces would work for both landlords and tenants. For those who think landlords would raise rents and force many people from their homes – you are very mistaken. Whether you realize it or not, there is fierce competition among landlords for good tenants, and this by itself will stabilize rents.*

*You state rent controlled units would become "permanently market rate when the current tenants leave". 1. The tenants are not being forced out unless it's for good reasons of lease violation; 2. You imply this would affect 626,600 apartments. All at once? Give me a break! Landlords want to keep good tenants and if this means keeping the rent below market rates, they will. Landlords will also balance the cost of refurbishing an apartment along with the cost of a vacancy against the loss of income from lower rental rates. It may very well be a wash.*

*In this case, it would be refreshing for the Times Editorial Board to be more circumspect in its recommendations.*

*David M. Elsky*