



CALIFORNIA CAMPAIGN FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES

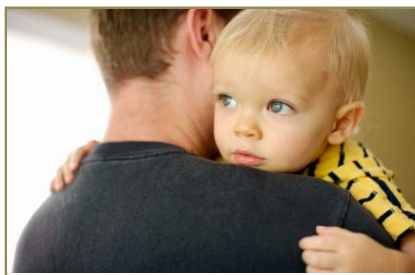
A Regional Report

Southern California



The Housing Situation in the 23rd Senate District Senator Fran Pavley

The housing market in Southern California is broken. Most of what has been built is still too expensive, leaving far too many families without options for an affordable place to live.



People who are key to the local economy cannot even afford to *rent* a home. To afford an average two-bedroom apartment, an L.A. County household needs an income of \$54,400 — significantly more than preschool teachers, carpenters, and paramedics earn.

Homeownership is even further out of reach. As of October 2009, the median sales price was still \$830,000 on the Westside, and extremely high in district communities such as Calabasas (\$1,095,000), West LA (\$630,000), West Hollywood (\$485,000), and Studio City (\$537,500).

Even with home prices dropping, a first-time buyer must earn more than \$61,239 a year to afford a median priced home within the city of L.A. (\$325,000) — assuming excellent credit and sufficient savings for a down-payment.

This gap between housing costs and wages highlights the need to create more balance in the housing market. We need greater housing variety and supply so everyone can find a place they can afford.



Some of the L.A. residents who would benefit include:

VERY-LOW-INCOME EARNERS*

Preschool Teachers	\$ 30,732
Barbers	\$ 30,472
Medical Equipment Preparers	\$ 30,213
Ambulance Drivers and EMTs	\$ 30,072
Floral Designers	\$ 27,703

*below 50% of median income

LOW-INCOME EARNERS**

Roofers	\$ 49,285
Carpenters	\$ 48,418
Choreographers	\$ 47,851
Agriculture Inspectors	\$ 47,732
Social Workers	\$ 47,531

**below 80% of median income

Increasing the predictability and stability of the housing market will bring many benefits to the 23rd District.



Benefits to Education

Despite foreclosures and home price declines, finding an affordable home is an ongoing challenge for families in L.A. County. A recent report of the link between home and health states, "Inability to afford adequate housing drives many families into overcrowded units, frequent evictions or changes of address and episodes of homelessness, all of which have consequences for the families' health, both mental and physical."

Family relocations mean that children must move from school to school. The cost of these school moves to children is significant. They suffer from:

- Slower academic progress.
- Lower achievement levels.
- Disruptions in relationships with teachers and class friends, often resulting in social and emotional distress.
- A reduced likelihood of graduating from high school.

More than 12,000 children in the L.A. Unified School District are homeless. Homelessness is particularly troublesome for children, resulting in poor school attendance; more academic and behavioral problems; increased hunger; more health and mental-health problems; and serious risks of violent abuse, molestation, and winding up in foster care.

Families with monthly housing costs that are less than one-third of their income have more money for groceries, medical care, and other needs and are better able to send their kids to school healthy and ready to learn. Increasing options for families to afford a safe and stable home will result in better outcomes for children. They will benefit from:

- Less exposure to violence.
- More regular school attendance.
- Reduced stress, illness, and mental-health problems.
- Having a safe place to play, do homework, and share family time.

Local schools will also benefit from increased family stability. Teachers can better plan for staffing and resources, and both teachers and classmates will experience fewer disruptions so they can focus on student achievement.

Benefits to the Environment

Affordable homes contribute to California's efforts to protect the environment. To reduce construction costs and rents, affordable homebuilders build more compactly, using land, water, and energy resources more efficiently. Most affordable-home developments are in locations closer to jobs and daily needs, increasing options for walking and public transit use, and reducing vehicle travel, greenhouse gas emissions, and development pressure on agricultural land and open space.

As an example, Colorado Court, located within walking distance of Santa Monica's city center, was the first affordable-home project in the country to be fully energy neutral, receiving a gold level rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. Owned by the nonprofit Community Corporation of Santa Monica, Colorado Court provides 44 single-resident homes for individuals with very-low incomes, including 20% with mental or physical disabilities. The five-story building includes a natural-gas turbine cogeneration system, solar photovoltaics integrated into the facade and roof, and a system that filters rainwater runoff from the entire city block to prevent contaminated water from reaching Santa Monica Bay. Other affordable homebuilders are doing the same — and some even more — to preserve the environment.

Affordable homes contribute to California's efforts to protect the environment.



The success of a community involves everyone

Increasing the predictability and stability of the housing market will bring many benefits to the 23rd District.



Benefits to Health Care

When medical and dental assistants, nurses' aides, surgical technicians, medical receptionists, and others can afford to live in the area, it increases hospitals' and clinics' ability to recruit and retain key, lower-paid staff to provide health-care services.

A supply of homes that are affordable to all benefits individual health as well. When individuals or families move frequently, live in overcrowded or substandard conditions, or are homeless, it is much more difficult to address health problems. More than 23% of L.A. County households are overcrowded. The 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count found more than 73,000 people were homeless on any given night, including more than 10,000 children. Homeless children, persons with mental illnesses, veterans, and older adults are especially at risk. For example,

- Homeless children have twice as many ear infections, 5 times as many stomach and diarrhea problems, and 4 times more asthma as housed children.
- Homeless veterans have high rates of hepatitis C, diabetes, prostate cancer, and HIV/AIDS, all potentially life-threatening conditions without proper treatment.

From the stability of a home, it is much easier to contact health-care providers, receive appointment reminders, maintain relationships with doctors and practitioners, and obtain medications.

People with mental illness often end up in jail or prison due to a lack of housing and treatment. Those who are homeless are also disproportionate users of costly emergency rooms, hospitals, and crisis care services. If people with serious mental illnesses can find a home with supportive services that helps them address their mental-health issues effectively, they are much more likely to remain stable, reducing demands on our health-care system, including emergency rooms, public hospitals, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, and veterans hospitals. They are also less likely to engage in criminal behavior, reducing costs for law enforcement, prisons, and parole.

