

# Advocacy Weekly Wrap

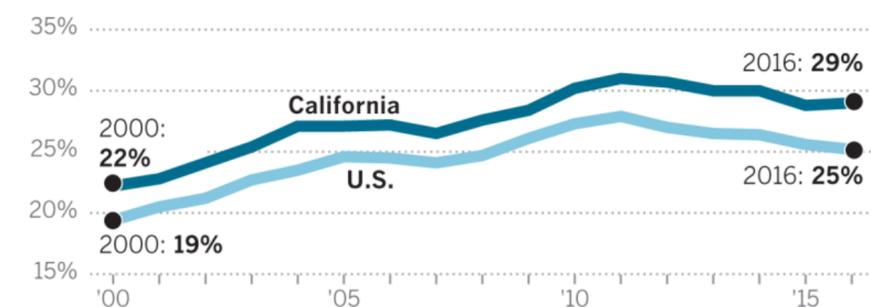
ISSUE 5: February 18, 2021

## ISSUE SPOTLIGHT: Rent Increases, Gentrification, and Homelessness

- **The rent crisis in Los Angeles has been an issue for years.** 57.1% of people living in Los Angeles were using 30% or more of their income for rent, according to a study done by [Harvard's Joint Center for Housing \(2015\)](#). Another analysis by [Zillow](#) concluded that in Black and Latino communities, the average renter uses 60% of their income to stay housed. Many cities within LA County still struggle with high rents and low vacancies: West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, among others.

### A bigger burden

Compared with the rest of the country, a larger portion of Californians spend more than half their income on rent and utilities.



Sources: Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies; California Budget & Policy Center

@latimesgraphics

This graph from the [Los Angeles Times](#) (2017) shows the degree of rent increase starting from 2000. The average rent in California has been consistently higher than average rent in the United States overall.

- **One contributor to this issue is the trend of gentrification.** Gentrification is [defined](#) as the process in which a poor urban area experiences an influx of wealthier people who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier, poorer residents. This trend is propelled by [developers and real estate investors](#) who look to profit from investing in inexpensive urban areas. They create luxury-housing complexes rather than affordable housing, jacking up housing rates.
- **Another contributor is neglect from government officials.** In 2018, California State Senator Scott Weiner introduced a real estate deregulation bill, SB 50, that activists feared would worsen gentrification. His support for a "trickle-down" luxury housing agenda is reflected by the significant campaign contributions he receives from those who work in real estate. Fortunately, in 2020, this [bill failed to pass](#) but many government officials still push for corrupt agendas, similar to Weiner.
- **Recently, California has taken steps to address this rent crisis.** In 2019, California became the second state to pass a [statewide rent control law](#), limiting annual rent increases and protecting tenants from eviction without cause. In March 2020, Los Angeles City Council paused rent increases and evictions entirely for rent controlled units for 60 days which was later extended to at least a year. This was passed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which hurt the economy and took away income from many individuals. Studies have shown tenants who live in rent controlled units pay [\\$3,240 less per year](#) on average compared to those who pay market rates.

## LEARN MORE

**Study: "Housing Challenges"** is a study on the prevalence of cost-burdened renters in America. Includes analysis of which populations are more vulnerable to being cost-burdened as well as its effect on homelessness. (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University)

**Webinar: "Gentrification and Displacement Near Los Angeles Rail Transit Stations"** examines the correlation between gentrification in Los Angeles and the development of public transit. (National Center for Sustainable Transportation)

**Article: "Gentrification of LA detrimental to lower-income population"** This article sheds light on the destructive effects of gentrification and an opinion on how this issue should be addressed. (Daily Bruin)

## ACTION ITEMS:

- **Watch three of these [mini-documentaries](#) on homelessness (0.5 hour):**
  - The mini-doc series, Invisible Stories, explores the lives of those who are homeless in Los Angeles in a personal, informative way. Watch 3 of these short videos to receive half a service hour!
- **Listen to a [podcast](#) on gentrification (0.5 hour):**
  - The podcast series, "There Goes the Neighborhood," made by WNYC Studios is about gentrification and its effects on populations within gentrified areas. Watch one of these to earn half a service hour. Rylee particularly recommends these 3 episodes:
    - [Gentrification: No More LA Traffic, Put It That Way](#)
    - [This Is a Black Neighborhood. You Aren't Black.](#)
    - [I Didn't Want to Evict you](#)

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