

Madam Chair, members of the committee. A few years ago, our community was rocked by scandal as the out of state landlord company which owned Santa Clara and Vista del Rio Apartments was profiting for years while utterly neglecting the properties. When those properties were shut down fully or partially, hundreds of people were cast out onto the street overnight. Some of them remain homeless to this day. A similar practice has been unfolding at Las Lomas Apartments with the only difference being that the intention is not to shut it down, but to displace existing residents (many have lived there for many years and have lived in this place for generations) so that it might be upscaled to cater to higher paying tenants. Needless to say, this practice has destroyed people's lives and left many homeless as well. Meanwhile, those who are duty bound to protect and serve the people are standing idly by as their constituents are robbed, displaced and immiserated by out of state capital.

The recent ban on public camping, the breakup of the sanctioned camp; the falsehoods perpetuated about the root causes of homelessness and the origin of the people on the street, which is overwhelmingly right here in the valley, paints a very dark picture of what is in store for the people of Espanola. The failure of our leaders to provide for the people and enforce the law as it pertains to the behavior of landlords, has created a reality in which the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community must accept that the rights and protections they are entitled to as citizens can be disregarded at best and at worst sold to real estate developers. They must submit to an exploitative process in which they cannot even act freely in the market to choose their housing, but rather are subjects of a landlord whose greed ensnares them physically, mentally and financially. And

should they fail to maintain expectations, or their use as a profit generator is over, in this oppressive relationship, regardless of the reasons why, they will be discarded, and increasingly likely to end up on the street. Then the same government which has failed us by allowing this situation in the first place, will move quickly and with full authority, to relegate a person from citizen, to peasant, to persona non grata.

We, the members of Alianza, are calling for a reversal. Enforce the rights of tenants according to the Uniform Owner Resident Relations Act. Expand them with a new tenant bill of rights, outlaw discrimination based on source of income in this state and repeal the prohibition on rent control. Hold landlords and large companies that come to our home accountable for the instability and destruction they've heaped on our people. We are calling on the Attorney General to join the growing list of states in the DOJ's lawsuit against the price fixing software, Reapage, which we have recently discovered is being used by Cornerstone Residential at Las Lomas. The people of Espanola who have struggled and been neglected for generations deserve better. They deserve to live in their land with dignity and respect. This situation is simply intolerable, and be warned, Madam Chair, members of the committee, Espanola is only the canary in the coal mine for the entire state of New Mexico.