

‘No on S’ say the United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD)

Longstanding Anti-Displacement Groups Make Clear Measure S Is Not the Answer

The United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD) Coalition stands firmly in opposition to Measure S. Proponents of the measure claim it will address various issues, including the displacement of current residents. These claims are based on the idea that displacement will stop if the development of large projects stops. Unfortunately, these claims are unfounded and mislead voters, many of whom significantly experience the harmful effects of disinvestment, followed by gentrification and displacement.

UNIDAD stands in opposition to forces of displacement and stands for community-serving development. We are neither NIMBYs (in opposition to most any development) nor YIMBYs (supporters of any and all development). We stand for a third way that transforms how capital and wealth are built and utilized within a community, driven by the interests of local residents and centered around values of equity and social justice. This third, more equitable way is rare and the few examples of its practice that exist are largely a result of strong community organizing. It is rare because free-market ideas of capital and investment are often used to silence community voices and build barriers to equitable development – but has been growing as a result of a vision developed in communities of color. As UNIDAD, we know that this third way works, as we have seen community achieve success with it. It is a way of planning and land use that is worth fighting for, and Measure S does not get us there.

Throughout our more than 20 years of work together, UNIDAD has taken on the large and imposing developers that the Measure S supporters seek to confront. While Measure S would stop development projects seeking a zone change, height district or a general plan amendment for 2 years, UNIDAD has shown that new development can directly invest in local residents through good job training and placement opportunities, deeply affordable housing, and investments in small business development and anti-displacement programs. Examples of our work can be found in the transformation of mega developments by AEG, the University of Southern California and various private developers through community benefits agreements. These victories helped set the foundation for the policies that recently became law when voters overwhelmingly passed Measure JJJ in November.

Let us be clear - while we do not believe community benefits agreements, or Measure JJJ, are panaceas for the ills of gentrification and displacement, we do know that they are crucial steps forward. At the same time, we still have a long way to go and need to change policy on parallel tracks, not just related to land use, but also related to areas of housing, tenant rights, health, environmental justice and economic development. Measure JJJ is powerfully significant because of how it affects projects citywide and because it changes the wholesale giveaway of land and wealth that the City allows when they grant upzoning with little or no community benefits. Measure JJJ requires deeply affordable housing and requires a ‘no net loss’ of existing housing affordable to low-income people in projects subject to its provisions - especially the largest developments in the City. JJJ also ensures that the associated jobs are



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well-paying, and that local residents fill at least 30% of the jobs - with 10% of jobs designated for residents who face additional barriers to employment, such as veterans or homeless workers. In contrast, Measure S does nothing to add to the stock of affordable housing or well-paying local jobs and, instead, prohibits many affordable housing projects from being built, including hundreds of units of housing for the homeless that would be financed by Measure HHH (also passed on the November 2016 ballot). This is unacceptable and cannot be allowed.

Measure S further does nothing to protect tenant rights or to advance anti-displacement programs and initiatives. Supporters of Measure S suggest that stopping development will protect tenants from being displaced because fewer out-of-scale projects will be allowed to be built. Unfortunately, Measure S adds zero tenant rights or other anti-eviction protections. And it does nothing to expand rent control or end the forms of eviction allowed by the Ellis Act. UNIDAD will throw full-hearted support behind legislation that seeks to achieve these goals. However, Measure S is not such legislation.

What Measure S **will** do, if passed, is to negate the achievements of Measures JJJ and HHH, hard won in the last election.

So, what must we do from here? First, we must vote down Measure S on March 7th. On March 8th, we must turn our focus to the South LA and Southeast LA Community Plans, which are among the first of several plans undergoing a rezoning process by the City. For decades, South Los Angeles has experienced wide scale disinvestment. Now, it is seen as prime real estate by outside developers. Neither of these are acceptable to South LA residents. If we want to protect South LA from the ongoing process of gentrification and displacement, we have to come together to promote zoning that achieves anti-displacement goals AND drives investment according to community interests.

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UNIDAD is a coalition of residents and their organizations in South Central LA dedicated to keeping families in their homes and improving the health and economic well-being of low-income communities of color through responsible development. We recognize that structural racism linked to housing, policing, land use and employment policies have caused great harm to Black, Latino, Native, Asian, immigrant and low-income communities. UNIDAD works to reverse these harms by promoting healthy and equitable neighborhoods through planning and land use that is rooted in community. More can be found at <http://www.unidad-la.org/resources/>