

SF's Ban of 'Intermediate Length' Leases Raises Concerns of Collateral Damage, Public Comment, ft. Laura Campbell

Laura Campbell, attorney in the KD San Francisco office, was quoted in a recent article published by Public Comment.

Some cities have used COVID to figure out how to entice people to move there. Not so in San Francisco, despite signs of a resident exodus and an office space vacancy rate eclipsing what it was in the dot-com bust years. On the contrary, San Francisco lawmakers used COVID to push forward a law that critics say will make the city more unwelcoming to new residents.

The law establishes and heavily restricts a new type of rental called Intermediate Length Occupancy (ILO), defined as leases between 30 days and one year. These rentals, which were legal before, will now require City permits. The law took effect last year, but the City's Planning Department just released details on its implementation.

Members of the Board of Supervisors, which unanimously approved the law in May 2020, argued that it preserves affordable housing for long-term residents by ensuring signed leases will be one year or longer. Opponents say the law is an example of half-baked regulatory overreach that could have unintended consequences for current and future residents.

"Somewhat ironically, the number of situations where somebody wants to sign a shorter lease grew with COVID," Laura Campbell, senior associate at KD law and a San Francisco land use law expert, said. "I've been getting more calls on my end saying that tenants really want a 6 month lease, which is now no longer possible."