



National Lawyers Guild Committee on Housing and Homelessness

February 25, 2020

To: Janet Napolitano, President, University of California
Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: UC Santa Cruz Graduate Student Teaching Assistants Strike

The National Lawyers Guild Committee on Housing and Homelessness--representing housing rights attorneys, legal workers and activists in California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Oklahoma, Virginia, New York, Minnesota, Connecticut and the District of Columbia-- hereby pledges its strong support of striking UC Santa Cruz graduate student teaching assistants.

We are well aware that the specter and reality of homelessness and poverty are at the core of this strike for a desperately needed cost-of-living allowance (COLA). The strikers earn less than \$2500 a month while rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Santa Cruz averages \$2600 a month. Many strikers are forced to live in their cars, in shelters and even in the homeless camps.

Thus, strikers' demand for a \$1400 COLA is fully justified in a city where gentrification, evictions and homelessness are rampant. Certainly, with an annual budget of \$35 billion, the University of California can provide a living wage to those whose work is so critical to public education.

As lawyers, we condemn the use of riot police, threats of mass firings and the deportation of students who stand to lose their visa status should they be unjustly terminated. We therefore add our voices to the growing solidarity movement in support of the strike and demand that UC cease all threats and police intimidation and come to the bargaining table.

Anthony D. Prince, Esq., Sarah White, Esq., National Chairpersons

Anne Jaffee, (New York) * Spencer Baldwin (Washington) * Garrett Wright (Oregon)
William Lonn (Oklahoma) * Rachel Wenning (Ohio) * Jesse Vogel (Ohio) * Susan Scott (California)
Mark D. Stern (Massachusetts) * Amanda Skiscim (Minnesota) * David Mandel (California)
Salmun Kazerounian (Connecticut) * James Dresser (Connecticut) * Maria Cuerda, (Massachusetts)

“This strike is dramatically changing the narrative, proving that the crisis of housing and homelessness is not one of personal failure, but that of a system that upholds corporate property interests regardless of the cost to civil society. As attorneys, we recognize also the role of the law and the courts in protecting the status quo of inequity and are determined to fight for a new jurisprudence based on human rights, including the right to housing.”

National Lawyers Guild Committee on Housing and Homelessness
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