

## IS IT REALLY CRIME-FREE?

### Executive Summary

Crime Free Multi-housing programs are the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design programs that city and county police departments teach and certify landlords, so they then enforce standards of criminality, like not having arrests or criminal records, on tenants at their rental properties. Consequences for tenants tend to be evictions and consequences for property owners for not enforcing the program are being sued or fined by the local government and courts. Sometimes municipalities just have the programs which tend to be similar and in other cases the programs are further enforced by Crime Free Rental Housing Ordinances that enforce participation of all rental properties in the municipality.

The concern for crime free housing laws are their impacts on housing insecurity for Black and Latino residents and residents of lower income who are disproportionately impacted by nuisance and crime free laws because of the higher rates incarceration and poverty among Black and Latinos (Pettit & Gutierrez, 2018, Gradín, 2012) and the racially motivated use of “nuisance” that historically excluded people of color from space (Henderson, 2019). It applies especially for the accessibility of public housing for low-income families (Krueger, 2010). These laws even encourage the type of short leases that allow property managers to quickly get rid of tenants by not renewing their leases (Krueger, 2010).

This study used Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) panel data for California Counties between the years 1991 to 2018 to conduct a panel data fixed effect analysis to determine if Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) programs were associated with a reduction in crime as had been cited in service call data released by police departments using within subject analysis.

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With a panel data fixed effects regression analysis, this study found that the CFMH program was associated with a statistically significant decrease in reported property and violent crime at the 5% level.

Considering the public support and supportive data for these programs, it is recommended that policymakers keep these programs while adjusting them to account for potential Fair Housing Act violations and adding term limits or limiting the type of crimes it can be used to enforce against so that some of the housing disparity that it causes is addressed.