

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Dean Caivano [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 9:09 AM
To: cityclerk
Subject: Public Comment for City Council Meeting (4/19)

My name is Dr. Dean Caivano. I live, work, and am raising a family here in the City of Merced (District 2). I am very fortunate to have the privilege and honor to educate our community members as a full-time professor at Merced College.

I write to you today regarding a critical issue: the lack of affordable housing and the need for inclusionary zoning. While there is a deluge of research that supports the societal benefits of access to affordable housing, I want to share my own experience.

Throughout my teenage years, my family and I experienced homelessness. Fortunately, through governmental assistance and employment, we were able to secure housing at an affordable rate. With this basic human right and need being met, it was only then that I was able to pursue my educational dreams. And where did I start? Well, I started at the community college-level, because it was the community that supported us; it was the community that showed it cared about its most vulnerable; it was the community that signaled a message of mercy, love, and hope. My own personal ambition to achieve academic success was *only made possible* by the basic fact that at night, after a long day of studying and work, I, not only had a place to rest my head, but the constant dread of losing our permanent, safe dwelling was no longer a living-nightmare.

My story is not unique. In fact, it is the story of millions of Americans, and countless Mercedians, who face the cruel reality of having no place to go or how to pay next month's rent.

I implore all of you, the elected representatives of our city, to adopt inclusionary zoning ensuring that all of our community members have an opportunity for personal and professional success.



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