

118-58908-015

August 20, 2008

San Francisco Chronicle
901 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Editor:

Regarding your article "Some evicted in 'renewal' may get housing help" (Chronicle, Monday, August 18, 2008), there are several areas that require clarification.

Originally the Certificates of Preference were provided only to the head of household along with housing relocation assistance as a requirement under the expired Federal Urban Renewal program. On June 1, 1999, the Agency issued new rules that expanded those eligible to other members of the household at the time of displacement, these were known as Residential C Certificates.

On June 3, 2008, the Redevelopment Commission authorized staff to make additional changes to the Certificate of Preference Program. Among those changes were extending the time limit for the use of all Residential Certificates, providing education and outreach for the Certificate Program, and expanded housing opportunities for all Certificate Holders.

The Agency has not expanded the Certificate to descendants, that is, the children of Residential C Certificate holders. The Commission asked for further evidence to show that previous Urban Renewal activity has caused long term harm which could be remedied by even further expansion of the Certificate of Preference program. Also we are also assessing whether the supply of newly-created affordable housing will be sufficient to meet the potential demands of existing Residential C Certificate Holders and those of an expanded class that includes the children of the Residential C Certificate Holders.

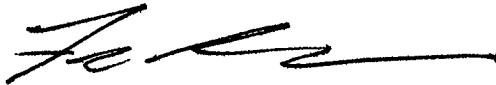
Under the current program which is enabled by state law, Certificate Holders have a preference only at Agency sponsored low- and moderate-income housing. The legislation sponsored by Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, if approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 9, 2008, would greatly expand the current and future housing opportunities for all Certificate Holders, by giving them priority for all City sponsored housing.

To exercise a Certificate, a Certificate Holder must meet the income and program requirements of the desired affordable housing. The Certificates **have no monetary value** and are non-transferable. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency is the only agency authorized to verify eligibility and to issue a Certificate of Preference, as part of California Redevelopment Law.

Those persons interested in the Certificate of Preference Program should contact the Agency at 415-749-2400. The Agency has not authorized any outside parties to contact Certificate Holders in regards to their Certificates. The Agency will be conducting its own search in the near future with the assistance of community based organizations.

The Agency supports Supervisor Mirkarimi's legislation as it expands housing opportunities for those Certificate holders still in need of affordable housing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Blackwell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director
San Francisco Redevelopment Agency