

Lawyers weigh in: All guest restrictions are unlawful!

A joint statement released in May by a group of legal organizations including Pivot Legal Society, CLAS, TRAC, First United Advocates, and TAPS Victoria said that supportive housing operators were also abusing the rights of tenants with these arbitrary guest bans. Their statement explains:

[Banning guests is] in direct contravention of section 30 (1) (b) of the Residential Tenancy Act, which stipulates that: a landlord must not unreasonably restrict access to residential property by a person permitted on the residential property by that tenant. This section of the RTA is core to tenants' right of access and is intended to protect individual tenants and their guests from unreasonable interference by landlords. Both the BC Supreme Court and the BC Court of Appeal have confirmed that building-wide guest bans are not a reasonable restriction.

Remember: The police are against our organizing but can't stop us -- Before the "Bust the Guest Ban" event started, while a half dozen people made signs together in the park across the street, Maple Ridge bylaw served the rally organizers with a \$200 bylaw infraction ticket for "conducting unauthorized business" in a park! The Provincial Health Order permits "support meetings" and political meetings so bylaw used a parks bylaw violation instead.

Come to the weekly meetings of

MAPLE RIDGE RESISTANCE

Every Tuesday
2pm to 4pm
Haney Nokia Park, 222nd
Street & Brown Ave

All meetings include hot food and beverages for all participants. We are meeting outside under a tent.

March for homes now!

ABOLISH SUPPORTIVE HOUSING! REAL HOMES NOW!

Monday December 14th
2pm, starting at Nokia Park
(222nd St and Brown Ave)

Wear masks and demand BC
Housing buy the abandoned
apartment building on 223rd!

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ANITA NEWS

News for the people after the tent city



"Bust the guest ban" fighters outside Alouette Heights supportive housing after the December 2nd news conference (Red Braid)

WE BUSTED THE GUEST BAN!

Bowing to protest, Coast Mental Health drops its unlawful guest ban in Maple Ridge supportive housing buildings

On Wednesday December 2nd, a group of residents of Coast Mental Health-run supportive housing buildings held a news conference to demand that their landlord stop blocking the rights of tenants to have guests visit their rooms. Overnight, Coast Mental Health decided to back down and drop the universal guest ban.

"We are happy that we've overthrown the guest ban," said Tracy Scott, a resident of the Alouette Heights supportive

housing building who initiated the news conference, acting as the Chair of her group Maple Ridge Street Outreach Society (MR-SOS).

"This change will save somebody's life in here," Scott said.

At the news conference the day before, Tracy Scott explained that the guest ban Coast Mental Health put in place in the spring resulted in the death of eight residents across the three

buildings they operate in Maple Ridge, that she knew of. Two of Tracy's close friends, Bru and Mama Bear, died in one horrible day during that spring guest ban.

Ivan Drury, an organizer with Maple Ridge Resistance and Red Braid Alliance for Decolonial Socialism, the groups that teamed up with Scott's MR-SOS to call the news conference, explained Coast Mental Health's reversal as thanks to the efforts of affected residents themselves.

"The landlord only backed down because people fought back," Drury said. "This minor victory should be a positive lesson to residents of supportive housing in Maple Ridge and everywhere, that it is possible to fight back against these institutions and win."

Tracy Scott said the Coast Mental Health spokesperson's comments to the media make it sound like there was never a guest ban, but that's just spin. "They're saying that it was not a ban, that they were just suggesting that we not have guests. But that's not true. If we tried to bring guests in the building, staff threatened to evict us and they'd call the cops," Scott explained.

Drury said that Red Braid organizers have heard that supportive housing providers in every part of Metro Vancouver have banned guests again during this new wave of the pandemic, as they did in the spring.

"There is absolutely a correlation

between supportive housing guest bans and the record numbers of overdose deaths since the Covid-19 pandemic began," Drury said. "Overturning Coast Mental Health's illegal guest ban policy in Maple Ridge should be the example that residents of supportive housing elsewhere follow to fight to overturn these discriminatory and deadly guest bans everywhere."

But even this win is imprinted with the mark of Coast Mental Health's arbitrary use of power. Coast Mental Health communications director Susan Hancock said to the media, "We would like to make clear that this isn't a guest ban, but a request to limit the number of guests in our facilities."

But the revised policy posted in Coast Mental Health's buildings appears more stringent and directive than a "request." A poster in the Alouette Heights elevator reads, "As of December 3rd, 2020 at 7am, every client is allowed to register one visitor under their name and suite number for the duration of the Order."

Tracy Scott said, "Even with ending the ban overall, they're still treating us as less-than. No other building except for us has these guest restrictions from their landlord. No one else has to sign in their guests. No other tenant has to have their

guests approved by their landlord."

Justin, who also spoke at the "Bust the Guest Ban" news conference said that he feels "it is good that they ended the ban for everyone, but it doesn't mean that I can have my girlfriend here."

His girlfriend Krista was arbitrarily banned from Alouette Heights before Coast Mental Health started their overall guest ban.

Justin explained, "Donna, the building manager came into my room to search for Krista. She came in a hazmat suit and a mask and visor, with gloves on. She stuck



Krista and Justin (pic. Red Braid)

her hands under the blanket on my bed and felt around and said 'I feel someone under here.' Then she called the police and five cops came and ordered Krista out of my room."

Justin says that Krista was pregnant and he was keeping her in his room to physically isolate and keep her safe

from the danger of the pandemic. "Thanks to my mom, I had a month's worth of food for both of us," he said. "We were doing everything we could in order to follow the health order, but the manager and cops threw my pregnant girlfriend out in the streets."

After that, Justin tried to sneak Krista back into his room because he was worried about her and the health of their yet-to-be-born child. "She has to sleep. She doesn't feel safe sleeping on the streets," he said. "But then I got a written notice from Coast Mental Health saying that the next time I let Krista into the building they would terminate my tenancy."

Ivan Drury said that while Coast Mental Health has bowed to pressure on their overall guest ban, tenants are still having their rights abused with guest restrictions because supportive housing is "fundamentally institutionalizing and corrupt." The answer, Drury says, is "to abolish the supportive housing system altogether. No one should be forced to give up their rights and freedoms in exchange for a roof over head, and that is the supportive housing ultimatum."