Commissioners – thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Edward Acosta, I am with the YMCA of Los Angeles and partnering with NALEO Education Fund.

I have lived in Echo Park for almost 8 years now. I’ve seen many changes happen around my neighborhood and park ever since the pandemic hit. Before the pandemic Echo Park was a beautiful and nice place. Kids and teens would sign up to play sports, do activities, and even have a summer camp. But when the pandemic hit, we saw many people losing their homes because they lost their jobs and they were forced to live on the streets. I mention this because many of these people began living at the lake which became crowded and an unsafe area for children. Towards the end of March, around 200 people who were homeless were kicked from the park which I think makes me wonder where they went afterwards. I read a few articles on how they were placed in temporary homes or hotels but when hotels and other places around LA began to open up, some of these people were told to leave which didn’t sound right to me.

Recently I visited Phoenix, Arizona for a family trip. We went by bus there and back but used an Uber to drive around the city. I asked one of our Uber Drivers about his life here in Arizona. He told me that he came from California a few years ago and found it easier to live in Arizona due to housing being cheap. To me it’s a shock because he manages to find himself being stable in rent compared to rent in my area.

I would like the commissioners to help many in the community with housing. There is a high population of Hispanics living here. From experience I’ve seen many struggle with housing and seen some have to move from their homes. I hope there’s a way where the commission can help with housing by helping reduce costs of rent.