

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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March 19, 2018  
Start: 1:11 p.m.  
Recess: 4:02 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: ROBERT E. CORNEGY, JR.  
Chairperson

COREY JOHNSON  
Speaker

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera  
Margaret S. Chin  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.  
Mark Gjonaj  
Barry S. Grodenchik  
Keith Powers  
Carlina Rivera  
Helen K. Rosenthal  
Ritchie J. Torres  
Jumaane D. Williams

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Vaughan Armor  
President of Barbara Simmons Tenant  
Association and Member of the  
Community for Change

Reverend Leslie Foltz Morrison

Basilio Garci  
President Tenants' Association from Queens  
Member of Whose Side on the Move

Matt Murphy  
Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Strategy  
New York City Department of Housing,  
Preservation and Development

Francesc Marti  
Assistant Commissioner for Government  
Affairs, New York City Department of  
Housing, Preservation and Development

Elizabeth Gummer  
Assistant Commissioner for Research and  
Evaluation, New York City Department of  
Housing, Preservation and Development

Norma Shrier

Member of the Rent Controlled Tenants  
Leadership Committee at Tenants and  
Neighbors

Cynthia Chafee  
Co-Foundress of the Stop Croman Coalition  
Member of GOALS

Abigail Martinez  
Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Miteriz Marcella (did not speak)

Exona Miranova  
Housing Policy Analyst  
Community Service Society

Bareka Williams, Deputy Director  
Association for Neighborhood and Housing  
Development

Leno Diaz, Housing Attorney  
Legal Services of New York City  
Queens Borough Office

Ellen Davidson, Staff Attorney  
The Legal Aid Society

Delcinia Glover  
Director of Education and Organizing for  
New York State Tenants and Neighbors  
Information Service and New York State  
Tenants and Neighbors Coalition

Hosea Ruiz Rodriguez  
Member of Picture the Homeless

Scott Hutchens  
Representing Picture the Homeless

Ed Viera, Jr.  
Disabled Special Ed Teacher

Susan Steinburg  
President of the Stuyvesant Town, Peter  
Cooper Village Tenants' Association

Jessica Burk  
Red Residents in Distress  
Christopher Street Partnership and  
The 95 Christopher Street Tenants'  
Committee

Julie Hamlin  
Dexter House 345 W. 86<sup>th</sup> Street  
Member of the Tenants' Association and  
Member of an NGO representing in the  
United Nations

Earl Carter (did not speak)

Ava Farkas  
Executive Director of the Met Council on  
Housing

Horea Rodriguez  
Resident from Korona - Queens

2 MS. TORRES: Mike check, mike check.

3 Today's hearing is on the Committee on Housing and  
4 Buildings being recorded by Sherese Torres, March 19,  
5 2018.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Good afternoon,  
7 everyone. I'm Council Member Robert Cornegy, Chair  
8 of the Committee on Housing and Buildings and I'm  
9 joined today by my Speaker, Corey Johnson and Council  
10 Member Grodenchik and Powers. We're here to hold a  
11 hearing and a vote on proposed Intro #600-A and  
12 Proposed Reso #188-A which adopts the findings of the  
13 most recent housing and vacancy survey and extends  
14 rent stabilization and rent control in New York City.  
15 New York City's housing stock is increasingly  
16 becoming unaffordable for those, for the many seniors  
17 and families who live here and the housing vacancy  
18 survey shows that it is crucial for us to extend rent  
19 regulation for the next three years and for our State  
20 counterparts to do the same when it expires in 2019.  
21 I look forward to working with my fellow Council  
22 Members, especially Speaker Johnson and advocates to  
23 ensure that that does happen next year. Thank you  
24 Mr. Speaker. I'd like to remind everyone who would  
25 like to testify today to please fill out a card with

2 the sergeant and we'll be sticking to a three minute  
3 clock for all public testimony except for the  
4 Speaker.

5                   SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, good  
6 afternoon everyone and thank you for being here to  
7 discuss rent regulation, the most critical tool we  
8 have for maintaining affordable housing in New York  
9 City. This year's housing vacancy survey results are  
10 staggering and show that it is of course necessary  
11 for the City to extend rent regulation. According to  
12 the survey, there is only a 3.63% vacancy in the City  
13 and when it comes to rent regulated housing, that  
14 vacancy rate drops to 2%. On top of that, three in  
15 ten renter households pay 50% or more of their income  
16 towards rent in the City meaning that these renters  
17 are rent burdened making it difficult to pay bills or  
18 raise a family. Even worse, the median rent went up  
19 by 6% in the three years since the last survey in  
20 2014. When combined with lack of available rent  
21 regulated housing, it's apparent from these  
22 statistics that this City is becoming increasingly  
23 unaffordable. We have lost hundreds of thousands of  
24 rent regulated housing since the mid 1990's and we  
25 cannot lose anymore. We cannot risk more families

2 having to choose between paying rent or putting food  
3 on the table. At a time when New York City is  
4 committed to expanding opportunities and access to  
5 affordable housing and when the City is struggling  
6 with a homelessness crisis, the survey shows that we  
7 have much more work to do. Throughout this year and  
8 until the State takes up rent regulation in June of  
9 2019, we'll be urging the State legislature to repeal  
10 laws that are making housing unaffordable such as  
11 vacancy decontrol, the preferential rent loophole and  
12 vacancy bonuses. We will continue to work on  
13 legislation that protects tenants and we will  
14 continue to increase opportunities to access  
15 affordable housing. Today we are taking the first  
16 step by renewing the findings that we are still in a  
17 housing crisis so if the State can extend rent  
18 regulation for another three years. I want to thank  
19 our Chair of this Housing and Buildings Committee, my  
20 friend, Council Member Robert Cornegy for having me  
21 here today and I want to thank you all the tenants  
22 and organizers in this room. I see so many friends  
23 when I walk around, Bill Senia [phonetic] and Michael  
24 and so many folks that are here that I've been in the  
25 trenches with over the years and I hope to see you

2 again in the coming months as we advocate for rent  
3 reform. I'll end with this. There was a press  
4 conference this morning with Council Member Torres  
5 related to Jared Kushner illegally trying to drive  
6 people out of rent regulated buildings in his  
7 buildings throughout the City and we have to ensure  
8 that the things that are within our power in the  
9 City, DOB ensuring that landlords are not able to  
10 engage in construction which drives people out of  
11 their buildings, we are going to continue to play  
12 that oversight role. We want to strengthen the rent  
13 laws and continue to work on behalf of tenants here  
14 in New York City where it makes sense for them so  
15 again I want to thank you Council Member Cornegy and  
16 I look forward to hearing from all of you and working  
17 with all of you in the months to come. Thank you  
18 very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you  
20 Mr. Speaker. We are going to begin the opening  
21 testimony with a panel of tenants and tenant  
22 advocates first. We really believe that it is  
23 important sometimes to hear directly from the voices  
24 prior to the administration so in this hearing today,  
25 prior to the administration giving testimony, we will



2 be hearing from Reverend Leslie Foltz Morrison,  
3 Basilio [phonetic] Garcia, and Vaughan Armor.

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'd like to affirm  
5 your testimony here before City Council oh never  
6 mind. You can begin. We generally ask ladies first.

7 VAUGHAN ARMOR: Yeah, but unfortunately I  
8 have to run. I'd ask them.

9 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Oh, okay. You  
10 worked that out already, okay.

11 VAUGHAN ARMOR: All right, hi. My name  
12 is Vaughan Armor and I'm the president of Barbara  
13 Simmons Tenant Association and a proud member of New  
14 York Community for Change. I want to thank you for  
15 the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I'm here  
16 because of two years ago my companion of 17 years  
17 passed away. The very next day the landlord called  
18 me and asked me what I'm gonna do about the  
19 apartment. He didn't call to say you have my  
20 condolences or to see how I felt. All he wanted to  
21 do is to question us about the stabilization and lie  
22 to us about it where he can get the apartment and  
23 raise the rent and that's totally disrespectful and  
24 this is what is going on in Crown Heights and  
25 throughout the City. 560 and 570 was taken over by

2 Treetop Developers. They came in, they beautified  
3 the outside, they fixed the lobby and they fixed the  
4 stairwells and hallways. They did this for attract  
5 newcomers. In the meanwhile, tenants like me that  
6 have been there for 17 and tenants that have been in  
7 the building for 20 and 30 years are going through  
8 lack of repairs, lack of heat and this is what we're  
9 facing right now and also what they want is to push  
10 out long-time residents have been in the building  
11 where they can put in new tenants and get market  
12 value. I'm here also to ask that we, the Council of  
13 the City, declare a housing emergency where we are  
14 hoping we can get Governor Cuomo and the State  
15 senators, especially the IDC members, to not only  
16 strengthen the rent laws but to protect us tenants by  
17 getting rid of such as the rent vacancy bonus, the  
18 vacancy bonus and preferential rent and this is a  
19 must. This is definitely a must and I'm telling you,  
20 I see my long-time neighbors being forced out  
21 especially what's going on in buildings where I live  
22 at so once again, I want to make it clear that right  
23 now where I live at in Crown Heights, we're going  
24 through what I call a super gentrification process so  
25 I once again say thank you for the opportunity and

2 please, please help us stay in our community. Thank  
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your  
5 testimony.

6 [Applause]

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: While I understand  
8 that we are all very passionate about affordability  
9 and staying in our communities, I have to ask you not  
10 to clap out loud. Generally, when we want to  
11 express, thank you, all you guys already knew. Thank  
12 you. Next.

13 LESLIE FOLTZ MORRISON: All right, I hope  
14 you can hear me better now. Greetings Chairperson  
15 Cornegy and Council President Mr. Johnson or Council  
16 Speaker. My name is Leslie Foltz Morrison, Reverend  
17 Leslie Foltz Morrison. I live in the Bronx in a rent  
18 stabilized building and I am here as a member of the  
19 Met Council on Housing in support of Resolution 188-A  
20 and Intro 600-A and I am so pleased to hear that you  
21 sound sympathetic and supportive of these bills. I  
22 thank you and all the members of the City Council and  
23 all your staff members who serve in public service on  
24 behalf of all New Yorkers and that you seem to be so  
25 concerned about renters that they could stay in their

2 apartments and avoid eviction and homelessness. I'm  
3 especially concerned about the need to repeal the  
4 statutory vacancy bonus which allows landlords to  
5 raise a rent stabilized apartment by 20% when a unit  
6 is vacated. I have seen in my building in  
7 Kingsbridge, my landlord has been tempted to take  
8 advantage of this loophole these past couple of  
9 months after a pipe burst and flooded three  
10 apartments. My neighbors in these units, two of them  
11 are families with young children, were moved from  
12 their flooded two bedroom apartment into studio  
13 apartments in the building but their rent was not  
14 reduced and all this time the repairs on their units  
15 that they want to move back into, repairs have not  
16 even begun and so I can see that with this statutory  
17 vacancy loophole that the landlord has a strong  
18 incentive to drag out these repairs to the units that  
19 the tenants want to move back into and then they will  
20 give up and move out and so the landlord can then  
21 jack up the rent for the next set of tenants while  
22 perhaps not even disclosing that the units had been  
23 water damaged so it is no wonder why New York City  
24 rents are so high with these loopholes permitted. In  
25 the face of our City's housing crisis, I think it is

2 essential that we protect all of the affordable units  
3 that we do have and the families who depend on them.  
4 It was 30 years ago this month when the U. S.  
5 Catholic Bishop's conference issued a moral challenge  
6 for us to view adequate housing as a human right and  
7 it is now harder, much harder, than it was 30 years  
8 ago to advocate for this with the commonly accepted  
9 practice of real estate investment trusts where they  
10 see every apartment as an opportunity to put profit  
11 over people and so you have this important  
12 opportunity to act to protect rent stabilize. Thank  
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you.

15 Mr. Garcia.

16 BASILIO GARCIA: Hello, my name is  
17 Basilio Garcia. Good afternoon (Inaudible). I am a  
18 tenant who's president of my tenant's association  
19 from Queens and a member of Whose Side on the  
20 Move[?]. I am standing here today to call from a  
21 stronger rent law. We cannot receive more increases.  
22 What we need desperately is to preserve affordable  
23 housing. I live in a building that every year has  
24 been affected by MCI systematically. The landlord  
25 had been applying for MCI to increase the legal rent.

2 This year, for example. We have MCI approved and  
3 there will be increase for \$30 per room. I have  
4 three rooms and (Inaudible). I will be writing a  
5 separate check for \$90. This increase is not  
6 increased. It will be an additional. I live on the  
7 district of Tenoro Palata [phonetic] and the  
8 community need their lack of (Inaudible) to evocate  
9 and represent them. We working class tenants cannot  
10 afford another increase. It is exhausting that the  
11 landlord receive, they get an additional increase to  
12 the legal rent. With the managed stronger protection  
13 for tenant or otherwise we'll be killing the  
14 affordable housing. Thank you so much.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you and thank  
16 you so much for all of your testimonies. Are there  
17 any questions? Thank you. At this time we'll ask  
18 the administration. Also I want to point out we've  
19 been joined by Council Members Chin, Gjonaj,  
20 Williams, Rosenthal, Torres and Espinal. At this  
21 point if I can just affirm your testimonies. If I  
22 can have you raise your right hand. Do you affirm to  
23 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
24 truth in your testimony before this Committee and to  
25 respond honestly to Council Member questions?

2 GROUP FROM HPD: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'd like for you to  
4 begin identifying yourselves please.

5 My name is Matt Murphy. I'm Deputy  
6 Commissioner of Policy and Strategy at HPD.

7 My name is Francesc Marti. I'm Assistant  
8 Commissioner for Government Affairs at HPD.

9 Elizabeth Gummer, Assistant Commissioner  
10 for Research and Evaluation, HPD.

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for  
12 joining us. You can begin your testimony.

13 MATT MURPHY: Thank you. Good morning,  
14 Speaker Johnson, Chair Cornegy and members of the  
15 Housing and Buildings Committee. I am Matt Murphy,  
16 Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Strategy at the New  
17 York City Department of Housing, Preservation and  
18 Development. I'm joined by my colleagues Elizabeth  
19 Gummer, Assistant Commissioner for Research and  
20 Evaluation and Francesc Marti, Assistant Commissioner  
21 for Government Affairs. I would like to thank the  
22 Committee for welcoming us today to discuss rent  
23 regulation a vital topic that fundamentally concerns  
24 the future of New York City. New York City continues  
25 to face a housing affordability crisis that causes

1 too many of our residents to pay a larger share of  
2 income for housing than they can sustain. This day-  
3 to-day reality forces many to make strategic trade-  
4 offs, to delay payment of other critical expenses, go  
5 into debt, or fall short on paying the rent which we  
6 know places them at a great risk of eviction and in  
7 more dire situations, homelessness. This is a crisis  
8 that requires action at every level of government.  
9 Despite constant federal budget threats, locally we  
10 have made great strides to both address the crisis  
11 head on as well as to create and update the tools we  
12 need over the long term to confront this issue. I'd  
13 like to take a moment to provide an overview of these  
14 tools. Together with the support of City Council,  
15 Mayor de Blasio has committed an unprecedented amount  
16 of resources to build and preserve affordable  
17 housing. HPD expanded the commitment to affordable  
18 housing, production and preservation with the  
19 announcement of HNY 2.0 which laid a roadmap to  
20 expanding the HNY plan to create 300,000 units of  
21 affordable housing by 2026. This announcement was  
22 coupled with the dedication of \$13.5 billion in  
23 Mayoral capital to be spent towards affordable  
24 housing, production and preservation through 2026.  
25



2 The administration has financed the construction of  
3 28,492 units and the preservation of 59,065 units  
4 towards these HNY goals. Last calendar year, HPD  
5 financed more than 24,500 affordable homes. About  
6 50% of that housing serves households with an income  
7 of under \$43,000 for a family of three. As well  
8 since 2014, the administration has provided funded  
9 for legal services and legislation to guarantee legal  
10 counsel for 180,000 low income tenants facing  
11 eviction. We have also taken part in a multi-agency  
12 anti-harassment taskforce with our State colleagues.  
13 We also work to expand the SCRIE and DRIE programs to  
14 freeze the rents of more eligible seniors and New  
15 Yorkers with disabilities. We also worked with City  
16 Council to pass laws that prohibit harassing tenants  
17 with buy-out offers, enhanced enforcement tools to  
18 address poor housing conditions, bring cases in  
19 housing court against owners who do not comply with  
20 outstanding violations and seek findings of contempt  
21 and jail against recalcitrant landlords when  
22 necessary. We also worked with the City Council to  
23 expand a certification of no harassment policy to  
24 prevent displacement in areas most at risk by  
25 requiring a review of a building's recent history

2 upon application for a material alteration building  
3 permit. We also worked to create a speculation watch  
4 list which is a data driven approach to help protect  
5 residents from the threat of investments in rent  
6 regulated buildings that could be an indicator they  
7 will be asked to leave to make way for higher paying  
8 residents. This work compliments what rent  
9 regulation laws accomplish which speaks to the  
10 importance of a comprehensive approach. For example,  
11 over the past few years, the Rent Guidelines Board  
12 issued historically low rent increases for the one  
13 million rent stabilized units in our City which  
14 protected against rapidly rising rents for those  
15 regulated households but the data we are here to  
16 discuss today shows that there are significant and  
17 continuing challenges we face. We'll show that there  
18 continues to be a mismatch between supply and demand.  
19 In fact, the typical New York City renter household  
20 is unable to afford an apartment at a median rent.  
21 The strong demand for housing combined with the  
22 recovered financial health of the multi-family market  
23 has led to large scale new construction and  
24 development throughout the City. Given that the  
25 demand for housing consistently outpaces available

2 supply, it is vital that the available supply of  
3 housing grows. This administration has worked but to  
4 ensure that as supply grows, the private market is  
5 required to provide affordable housing. For example,  
6 in partnership with Council, we passed mandatory  
7 inclusionary housing which is the strongest  
8 inclusionary housing program in the nation and  
9 ensures that as housing supply grows through a  
10 rezoning action, a portion of that housing is  
11 permanently affordable. While vital, the growth and  
12 supply is not enough to address the housing shortage.  
13 The housing shortage affects all New Yorkers but  
14 acutely falls on those households that are able to  
15 afford only the lowest cost units. The pressure of  
16 market demand and lack of supply places every day New  
17 Yorkers at risk of sharper rent increases, harassment  
18 and displacement from their homes and communities.  
19 This brings us to the importance of rent  
20 stabilization laws. Rent stabilization laws provide  
21 a critical resource for about one million New York  
22 City households that must be protected and  
23 strengthened in order to provide lower income  
24 households the choice to live in our great City  
25 amidst our housing crisis. The law provides the

largest source of low cost housing in the City and offers critical tenant protections that enable residents to remain in their homes and exercise the choice to stay in their neighborhoods. Rent stabilization also supports our affordable housing work. HPD financed units become stabilized in exchanged for our investment which provides an extra layer of protection for those residents. The rent law reforms of 2011 and 2015 made progress towards our protecting our rent stabilized stock. By our estimates, these reforms helped to retain 100,000 units that otherwise would have exited rent stabilization but given the market pressures facing our City, it is critical we do more. That's why in the coming 15 months we'll be strongly advocating for additional rent regulation reforms to keep New Yorkers in their homes and curb the predatory landlord practices. Our rent stabilization agenda in 2019 will be built on these principles. Retaining the rent stabilized stock and the quality of this stock over the long term, preserving affordability of this stock, especially at lower rents, ensuring that current tenants are securing their homes and neighborhoods and protecting the benefits of rent

2 stabilization for future tenants. As we prepare to  
3 enact and advocate for additional reforms in Albany  
4 in 2019, we'll be meeting with stakeholders in order  
5 to create a comprehensive rent regulation reform  
6 agenda. Your partnership, feedback and advocacy is  
7 essential in this process. As this process unfolds,  
8 it remains clear that it takes a comprehensive  
9 approach to address our affordable housing shortage.  
10 Extending rent stabilization is essential to this  
11 overall effort. Before turning over to Assistant  
12 Commissioner Gummer, I'd like to reemphasize what an  
13 enormous priority this is for this Mayor and  
14 administration. As we work towards creating and  
15 sharpening policies that work to make New York City  
16 America's fairest City, rent stabilization laws are  
17 the key to remaining an economically diverse City and  
18 a thriving cultural metropolis and I know that this  
19 is a focus we all share.

20 (Inaudible)

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Everyone's gonna have  
22 their chance to speak. We respect each other here.  
23 Chair Cornegy.

24 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Thank you. I am  
25 Elizabeth Gummer, Assistant Commissioner of Research

2 and Evaluation at HPD. Thank you for the opportunity  
3 to appear before you today to testify in support of  
4 Resolution #188-A and Introduction #600-A. These two  
5 important measures represent local confirmation of  
6 the continued housing emergency in New York City and  
7 are required in order to continue our system of rent  
8 control and stabilization. Simply put, they are what  
9 makes the extension of the rent control and rent  
10 stabilization law possible. As you know, the City  
11 Council must pass these two pieces of legislation 30  
12 days after receipt of the findings of the Housing and  
13 Vacancy Survey and the Mayor must sign the  
14 legislation before April 1. HPD has submitted  
15 selected initial findings of the 2017 HVS to the  
16 Council on February 9, 2018. Our testimony today  
17 will present initial findings of the 2017 New York  
18 City Housing and Vacancy Survey. This survey of the  
19 City's housing stock has been carried out every three  
20 years since 1965. It is the longest running housing  
21 survey in the country and is of critical importance  
22 for understanding how our City is changing and what  
23 we can and should do to support improvements in  
24 policy and programming. Its methodology has remained  
25 consistent over time with only minor changes to

2 improve reliability and validity. It is conducted by  
3 the United States Census Bureau at the request of the  
4 City of New York. Interviews for the current survey  
5 were conducted between January and June 2017. This  
6 makes it the most up-to-date representative data on  
7 New York City current available. As required by  
8 State and local law, the purpose of the survey is to  
9 establish the net rental vacancy rate which is used  
10 to determine if New York City is in a state of  
11 housing emergency. Local law also required that a  
12 survey be conducted to examine the supply of housing,  
13 the condition of housing and the need for continuing  
14 regulation and control of residential rents and  
15 evictions. Today we will share key statistics on the  
16 current state of housing as well as provide a more  
17 detailed portrait of the rent stabilized stock and  
18 tenants living in the stabilized units. As have past  
19 waves of the HVS, more detailed analysis will be made  
20 available over the coming months and the Census  
21 Bureau plans to release the microdata later this  
22 summer for analysis by a range of policy makers,  
23 policy researchers and academics to utilize the HVS  
24 in our everyday work. The 2017 Housing and Vacancy  
25 Survey reports the vacancy rate in rental apartments

1 in New York City to be 3.63%, significantly below the  
2 5% net rental vacancy rate threshold set forth in  
3 State and local laws as the condition determining  
4 that a housing emergency continues to exist. As the  
5 figure shows, the net rental vacancy rate varies by  
6 rent level. Among the lowest cost units, those with  
7 asking rents below \$800, the vacancy rate is 1.2%.  
8 While among the highest rent levels, it is above the  
9 5% threshold. Units with asking rents of \$2,000 to  
10 \$2,499 have a 5.2% vacancy rate and those with asking  
11 rents at or above \$2,500 have an 8.7% vacancy rate.  
12 New York City continues to see growth in the housing  
13 inventory. In 2017 we estimate that the stock  
14 comprises 3.47 million units. This is the largest  
15 housing stock recorded since the HVS began in 1965.  
16 As a reminder, this estimate is a snapshot of the  
17 current housing stock and the increase of 69,000  
18 units since 2014 represents a net change, the results  
19 from both loss of stock as well as the creation of  
20 new units. The low vacancy rate despite this record  
21 break in housing stock number indicates that although  
22 supply has continued to increase, it has failed to  
23 keep pace with the continuing demand for housing. In  
24 2017, there were approximately 966,000 rent  
25



2 stabilized units representing 44% of the overall  
3 rental stock. As with our estimates of the overall  
4 housing inventory, this represents a point in time  
5 estimate that accounts for both the loss of rent  
6 stabilized units as well as newly stabilized units  
7 that have come on line. We continue to improve the  
8 data and methodology of the HVS with each successive  
9 wave. In 2017, we again improved the accuracy and  
10 validity of our estimates of units subject to rent  
11 stabilization. This estimate of 966,000 units is  
12 statistically equivalent to the number of units that  
13 were rent stabilized in both 2011 and 2014 if the  
14 same methodology were applied. As this map shows,  
15 these units are located throughout the five boroughs  
16 but are concentrated in the Bronx and Manhattan as  
17 well as parts of Brooklyn and Queens. The areas  
18 where we see the fewest number of rent stabilized  
19 units are parts of the City where we know that home  
20 ownerships are high. The HVS measures housing  
21 conditions in several ways including through self  
22 report of the current occupants regarding maintenance  
23 deficiencies. One important measure of housing  
24 quality is the count of items reported by the current  
25 occupants with five or more deficiencies representing

1 a unit with critical deficits. In 2017, 3.6% of  
2 renter occupied units reported five or more  
3 deficiencies. This is the lowest prevalence on  
4 record since 1991 when the HVS began using this  
5 measure. Although not shown here, we found that  
6 housing quality is as good or better on nearly every  
7 measure included in the HVS. Since 1991, the HVS has  
8 also collected data regarding neighborhood conditions  
9 and quality. In 2017, 76.1% of renter occupied  
10 households rated the condition of the residential  
11 structures in their neighborhood as either excellent  
12 or good and again, this is the highest on record  
13 since we began using this measure in 1991. As you  
14 know, for many years rents continued to increase  
15 while wages stagnated. As first seen in other census  
16 surveys, that trend has finally reversed. In 2017,  
17 the HVS estimated that household incomes among  
18 renters rose by 10.9% in real terms while rents  
19 increased by 6.2%. Incomes grew more than rents in  
20 both rent stabilized tenants as well as those living  
21 in private non-regulated rental units. Despite the  
22 increase in median income, we continue to face a  
23 severe affordability challenge. According to the  
24 2017 HVS, the median household income for renters was  
25

1 \$47,200. That's equivalent to a monthly income of  
2 \$3,933 before any taxes. Using standard federal  
3 guidelines that suggest a household should pay no  
4 more than 30% of gross income on housing costs, the  
5 typical renter household could afford to pay as much  
6 as \$1,180 in rent and utilities but the median  
7 contract rent in 2017 was \$1,337 and it was \$1,450  
8 when we factor in the cost of utilities which are  
9 also high. Moreover, the median asking rent of units  
10 available right now in the market is \$1,875 well  
11 above the \$1,180 the typical household could afford  
12 to pay. What results is a high prevalence of rent  
13 burden across nearly every income level. In 2017 we  
14 found that 56% of renter households were rent  
15 burdened or paying more than 30% of income for  
16 housing each month, 32% were severely burdened or  
17 paying more than 50% of income for housing. This  
18 graph shows the prevalence of rent burden by HUD  
19 income limits or AMI which is a relative measure of  
20 income that factors in differences in household of  
21 five and local market conditions. When we roll this  
22 up by income group, we see different facets of our  
23 affordability crisis. In the first bar which  
24 includes households that are extremely low income,

1 typically at or near the federal poverty line, we see  
2 that about half of households or just over 360,000  
3 are rent burdened. Of those who are rent burdened in  
4 this income stratum, almost all are severely  
5 burdened. The remaining 50%, those in the gray  
6 portion of the stacked bar, are largely served by  
7 subsidized housing or otherwise receiving some form  
8 of rental assistance but the second bar, these are  
9 households designated as very low income or low  
10 income. A larger share are rent burdened. Here  
11 about 60% are paying more than 30% of income toward  
12 housing costs each month and that's equivalent to  
13 about 425,000 rent burdened households who are very  
14 low or low income. Of those, 165,000 are severely  
15 burdened or paying more than half of income toward  
16 housing costs. Again, the remainder is either  
17 receiving some form of assistance with housing costs  
18 or living in a private market in lower cost units.  
19 The HVS helps to identify the components of this  
20 affordability challenge. One side is rent burdened  
21 based on the intersection of housing costs and  
22 incomes but another critical component is the overall  
23 composition of our rental inventory. Between 2014  
24 and 2017, we saw a large net loss of the lowest cost  
25

units as rents shifted upwards. This graph shows the number of rental units by rent level as measured by the 2014 and 2017 HVS's. The bars on the left show the number of units renting for less than \$1,500 in both 2014 and 2017. The bars on the right show the number of units renting for \$1,500 or more again in both '14 and '17 HVS's. As you can see, over this time period, there was a net decrease of low cost units and a corresponding increase of higher cost units. While we saw an overall increase of 6.2% in median gross rent, there is substantial variation by neighborhood. In particular, parts of Brooklyn and Queens have seen substantial increases in median rental costs. This map shows the changes in median gross rent among only the substantive units that are rent stabilized by neighborhood. As you can see, many neighborhoods experienced little or no change in rent. That's indicated in the gray. Many neighborhoods that saw large increases in overall rental costs saw lower increases for stabilized units. This is particularly true for parts of Brooklyn, Ft. Greene, Bedsty, Park Slope and Queens, particularly Ridgewood and in Manhattan including East Harlem, Washington Heights, Inwood and the Upper

West Side. In evaluating the continued need for rent stabilization, it is important to examine the demographics of who is served. Here we see the income distribution of rent stabilized tenants - 64% are low income that is earning up to 80% of HUD income limits or AMI. That's equivalent to about 610,000 households and an additional 23% are either moderate or middle income. In summary, New York City continues to face a housing emergency with a net rental vacancy rate of 3.63%. While we have added to the overall stock of housing, it is insufficient to keep pace with demand. We continue to have about 966,000 rent stabilized units in our City located throughout the five boroughs. Both housing and neighborhood conditions are good and many dimensions have improved since 2014. There is a clear and continuing need for rent regulation in New York City. The 2017 HVS shows that while renter incomes have increased more than rents, there continues to be an affordability crisis. Half of renter households are rent burdened. One-third are severely burdened. Median rents are not affordable to the typical New York household. Rent stabilized rents rose less sharply and represent a large and generally lower

2 cost portion of the stock and moreover, the majority  
3 of rent stabilized tenants are low income. Taking  
4 all of these first findings into consideration, we  
5 find that New York City continues its state of  
6 housing emergency. The shortage is particularly  
7 acute for lower income households who face the lowest  
8 vacancy rates and a shrinking stock of lower cost  
9 units. It is clear from the 2017 HVS that we must  
10 not only continue to add to the overall stock to  
11 address the emergency, but specifically add lower  
12 cost units and work to retain existing units with  
13 lower rents in order to support everyday New Yorkers  
14 who face continued affordability challenges. Thank  
15 you for the opportunity to testify. We're happy to  
16 answer any questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your  
18 testimony. At this time, we'll have questions from  
19 Mr. Speaker.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I thank you for your  
21 detailed testimony. It's great to actually dig down  
22 into the numbers and to understand the composition of  
23 our rental inventory, the wage gaps that exist and  
24 understanding what the needs really are so it was  
25 very, very helpful to understand the details of the

2 housing vacancy survey. Could you speak a little bit  
3 and I know we have folks here today who are in rent  
4 controlled apartments, can you talk a little bit  
5 about, I know we're talking about two different  
6 things on how they're categorized and the rent  
7 control stock has dwindled quite a bit. If you could  
8 speak a little bit to not just the rent stabilized  
9 units but also the rent controlled units.

10 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Certainly, so as you  
11 know and for the benefit of those who are not as  
12 familiar with the details of the policy

13 (Inaudible)

14 ELIZABETH GUMMER: I'm sorry?

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Could you speak a  
16 little louder for the gentleman.

17 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Is that better? Can  
18 you hear me?

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Sir, if you want to  
20 come sit up front here, you can, if it's gonna be  
21 easier for you to hear. Go ahead.

22 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Thank you, so for  
23 those of you who are not as familiar, rent control is  
24 of course an important part of our stock of the rent  
25 regulated stock and is the original rent regulation



2 policies that are for units where the current  
3 occupants or the original occupant successors have  
4 been in continuous residence since July 1 of 1971.  
5 As those original occupants or their successors leave  
6 those units, they transition to being rent stabilized  
7 so HVS has tracked rent controlled as well as rent  
8 stabilized and other types of housing over many  
9 decades. In 2017, there were about 22,000 remaining  
10 rent controlled units and of course that's a very  
11 small share but the occupants of those units are  
12 particularly vulnerable and largely comprised of  
13 seniors and those who have aged in place.

14 (Inaudible)

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Sir, sir you're gonna  
16 have the opportunity to testify. We asked, yes you  
17 will if you sign up.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Did you sign up?

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Sir, sir, please be  
20 respectful. Everyone else is. Thank you for  
21 answering the question. We really appreciate it. So  
22 you talked a little bit about the methodology in the  
23 survey and how you analyzed the data. What did HPD  
24 and the U. S. Census Bureau change in the methodology  
25 from three years ago up until now?

2 ELIZABETH GUMMER: So as I mentioned in  
3 my testimony, with each wave of the HVS, we seek to  
4 make very surgical improvements that increase our  
5 overall validity and the accuracy of our estimates.  
6 For 2017, we incorporated additional administrative  
7 data on the rent stabilized stock that we had not  
8 previously incorporated. This was information about  
9 units that had exited rent stabilization in the past  
10 so for example, through vacancy decontrol or through  
11 expiring tax benefits and the information we  
12 incorporated newly into 2017 was on about 62,000  
13 units that had been decontrolled at some time before  
14 our survey. The vast majority of those, about 47,000  
15 had decontrolled at some point between 1993 and 2010  
16 so those are older units that had previously exited  
17 that had not been factored in until 2017.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So what do you think  
19 was wrong with the previous methodology that it  
20 wasn't doing the things that you just said. Are  
21 there other additional things that we could be doing  
22 to make sure that we have the most accurate data we  
23 need to make these decisions?

24 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Sure, so as I said, we  
25 always are striving and open to any and all thoughts

2 on how we can improve what we do and that's of course  
3 balancing with consistency while as you said making  
4 sure that our data are the most accurate and complete  
5 as possible. Previous methodology used a combination  
6 of source of information which we continued to use  
7 even in 2017, information from Department of Homes  
8 and Community Renewal, the DHCR, from the Department  
9 of Finance, of course from HPD and from the  
10 information we gathered directly from occupants such  
11 as the year that they moved in, their rent levels,  
12 etc. By incorporating this additional information on  
13 units that are permanently exempt and registered as  
14 such with DHCR, we're able to incorporate yet one  
15 more piece of critical information to make sure that  
16 our current estimate of 966,000 units represents the  
17 full universe of units subject to rent stabilization.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Does the administration  
19 support the repeal of vacancy decontrol?

20 FRANCESC MARTI: Hello, my name is  
21 Francesc Marti, Assistant Commissioner for  
22 Government Affairs. It's still early on in process  
23 and we are finalizing our agenda for rent renewal  
24 next year. This item is definitely something that  
25 we are looking at. We know from past reforms that

2 we should not focus exclusively on one item, that it  
3 is important to

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No, no, no, this is a  
5 yes or no question. Is the administration's  
6 position that you support the repeal of vacancy  
7 decontrol or not?

8 FRANCESC MARTI: Sure, you know, we share  
9 the same view as the Council that this is an unfair  
10 policy and that it needs to be addressed, I, I,

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do you support

12 FRANCESC MARTI: I don't have anything  
13 further to add because we are still formulating the  
14 agenda but I think I take your position and I will  
15 take it back to my colleagues in the HPD and in the  
16 administration.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I am flabbergasted by  
18 that answer and I think you're gonna hear from  
19 tenants today on why they're likely flabbergasted as  
20 well by that answer from this administration that has  
21 made affordable housing and the preservation of  
22 affordable housing a cornerstone item the last four  
23 years. We know the best way to preserve affordable  
24 housing is through repealing vacancy decontrol which

2 is how we've lost the most number of units since it  
3 was repealed.

4 FRANCESC MARTI: No, I, I mean I do want  
5 to clarify, we do share your view that this is an  
6 unfair policy that leads to the loss of rent  
7 stabilized units and we are going to be working with  
8 you on addressing this in the rent reforms next year.  
9 We want to keep an open mind as we formulate our rent  
10 reform agenda. You know, we are further analyzing  
11 the data and we have to engage stakeholders in  
12 discussions and as I said before, there are different  
13 levers that need to be pulled in concert[?] in order  
14 to maximize the amount of units we want to preserve.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Well, when the Mayor  
16 ran for Mayor, he supported the repeal of vacancy  
17 decontrol.

18 FRANCESC MARTI: When we stand by  
19 (Inaudible).

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And when the rent laws  
21 expired in 2015, I believe or were up for rental in  
22 2015, the Mayor supported the repeal of vacancy  
23 decontrol and what we know as a Council and as tenant  
24 activists who are here is that it's not helpful to  
25 weigh in next year. It's helpful to weigh in now.

2 That, I think is the most important thing so I really  
3 hope that you all will take a leadership role in this  
4 in a meaningful way. I'm gonna, there are plenty of  
5 colleagues here that have questions so I'm not gonna  
6 ask you a preferential rent which they will ask  
7 about. I'm not gonna to ask about the vacancy bonus  
8 which they will ask about. I'm not gonna to ask  
9 about MCI changes which they will ask about but these  
10 are all things that I think are pretty important as  
11 we talk about the future of renewal and strengthening  
12 of rent regulation and rent control. I will say this  
13 though, Council Member Torres is not here but he had  
14 a press conference this morning working with the  
15 housing rights initiative to look at some buildings  
16 owned by Jared Kushner on the falsification of  
17 Department of Building forms where construction was  
18 being done in buildings and Jared Kushner and his  
19 company did not, did not check off the forms that  
20 they were rent regulated tenants in those buildings  
21 and we want to make sure that HPD is coordinating  
22 with the Department of Buildings to not allow this to  
23 happen in the future so if you could talk a bit about  
24 what HPD is doing to ensure the Department of

2 Buildings is working in coordination with you all to  
3 protect rent regulated, rent controlled tenants.

4 MATT MURPHY: Yes, we saw that news and  
5 it's extremely disappointing. I can say this  
6 administration is laser focused on preventing tenant  
7 harassment. It's our understanding that DOB did go  
8 to that site for tenant's safety inspections. DOB  
9 will have more information about those particular  
10 sites and buildings but I, but I can say that we do  
11 coordinate with the Department of Buildings on anti-  
12 harassment taskforce, two anti-harassment taskforces.  
13 I can also say in situations like these, the, we have  
14 worked with City Council to create some more  
15 proactive tools so, for example, something like the  
16 acquisition of rent regulated buildings which is what  
17 took place, from my understanding in this case. We  
18 worked with Councilman Torres to create a speculation  
19 watch list which will be coming out this year. The  
20 speculation watch list takes a look at rent regulated  
21 buildings that transact and looks at a ratio between  
22 their rent role and the acquisition price for a very  
23 low amount so meaning that a building might have been  
24 purchased for more amount than even the market would  
25 say can support that rent role. We expect that going

2 forward, in tools like this speculation watch list,  
3 would catch transactions like that so we can be, it's  
4 more on HPD's radar that there might be an indication  
5 that a building is at risk of tenant harassment or  
6 tenants being offered buyouts. As well, we work to  
7 expand the certification of no harassment policy.  
8 Certification of no harassment requires that a owner  
9 seek out certification from HPD upon applying for a  
10 permit from the Department of Buildings for buildings  
11 that indicate something about their residents or  
12 their transaction or their financial or physical  
13 distress that says this warrants a deeper look so  
14 when that takes place, the City is in a position of  
15 doing an investigation.

16 FRANCESC MARTI: Sorry, I'd like to  
17 clarify my earlier statement. I'd just like to say  
18 that we do support the repeal of vacancy decontrol so  
19 I'd just like to state that for the record.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Chair Cornegy.

23 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you,

24 Mr. Speaker and thank you for clearing that up

25 administration. The median asking rent increased



2 33.9% from 2014 to 2017. Have you done any analysis  
3 to see if there is a correlation between displacement  
4 and the increase of rent in certain neighborhoods?

5 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Thank you for your  
6 question. We only received the 2017 data about two  
7 weeks ago so this is very early in our cycle that  
8 goes up to three years. We have not yet begun doing  
9 analysis like your question on the increase in rents  
10 and other factors such as displacement but we're very  
11 anxious to speak with any member of the City Council  
12 about priority analytic issues so that we can  
13 prioritize those as we begin our research agenda  
14 based on the 2017 HVS.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Well, so I will  
16 just rephrase my question. Will you be doing a

17 ELIZABETH GUMMER: We will certainly  
18 consider how we can use our data to be able to  
19 estimate that phenomenon which we know is a critical  
20 problem but we have to be able to work out the  
21 statistical methodology to do so. I'm committed to  
22 sitting down and seeing if that is something that we  
23 can do with the data we currently collect.

24 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I think that the  
25 data derived from a close look could be very helpful

2 in this City going forward. I don't know if you  
3 know, I happen to represent what I believe to be the  
4 epicenter gentrification which is Bedsty and Northern  
5 Crown Heights and it's incredibly important for not  
6 only my constituency but for the City to have good  
7 solid understanding of the correlation between the  
8 two anecdotally.

9 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Um-huh.

10 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I think everybody  
11 in this room would believe that there is a  
12 correlation and so I think it would be probably  
13 paramount to do this sooner than later so I will  
14 certainly personally be reaching out to your office  
15 to follow through.

16 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Sure, and we look  
17 forward to working with you on that.

18 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, I also  
19 want to let, acknowledge that we've been joined by  
20 Council Member Rivera. We can go to Council Member  
21 questions now. Keith Powers.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you and  
23 thank you for having this hearing and I first want to  
24 welcome my leader of my tenant's association, Susan  
25 Steinburg from Stuyvesant Town who has been leading I

2 think the charge along with many others in this room  
3 in the City for preserving and protecting tenants in  
4 rent regulated apartments and I had the benefit of  
5 growing up in a rent stabilized apartment and I care,  
6 I care deeply about continuing the future for many  
7 more and I thank HPD for your work in that area and  
8 I'm glad you do support vacancy decontrol. I do too  
9 but much more and I hope we're not waiting until next  
10 year to be fighting the fight in Albany. Every  
11 single year MCI reform, preferential rent reform,  
12 vacancy bonuses, vacancy decontrol, you name it, you  
13 have our support and my support and, and I want to  
14 ask a few questions. So much of this goes to Albany  
15 but today and I think Council Member Torres' report  
16 and oversight around Department of Building permits  
17 and other processes here at the City level does  
18 highlight the fact that the City plays a role in  
19 preserving rent stabilization and rent control units.  
20 Can you give us more information, or maybe advise us  
21 more details of the existing legislation that you  
22 have or you're looking at or other tools that might  
23 be available to the Council so we don't have to go to  
24 and I do note that tenants are going up to Albany  
25 next week to continue this fight but that we don't

2 have to go to Albany. What is available to us? What  
3 should we be looking at or what is HPD looking at in  
4 terms of preserving rent stabilized units or ensuring  
5 that they don't go out of the rent regulation, rent  
6 stabilization program?

7 MATT MURPHY: Give me one second so in  
8 addition to some of the tools I mentioned in terms of  
9 the certification and no harassment and which builds  
10 into the process an opportunity for community boards  
11 and for tenant groups to weight in when there's a  
12 application and the predatory equity watch list,  
13 there are some key things that we've done at the  
14 local level and we want to use these and also build  
15 on these so HRA has provided free legal services for  
16 180,000 New Yorkers since 2014 and evictions total  
17 are down by 27%. Supporting this tool going forward  
18 and making sure that people are aware that this is a  
19 resource available to them is critical. Enforcing  
20 the housing maintenance code in general is an anti-  
21 harassment effort. This includes calling 311 when  
22 there are heat outages or any other complaint. HPD  
23 inspectors respond to those complaints and we have  
24 done about, we've attempted nearly 873,000

2 inspections just in FY17 and we issued 481,000  
3 violations.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you and I  
5 know, I'm over my time but I'm just gonna ask maybe  
6 one or two follow-up questions. In terms of today's,  
7 I know it's an investigation into whether something  
8 happened or not so we're far away from actually  
9 making a determination but beyond just the legal  
10 services which are very important, my concern is  
11 always when you have agencies that aren't talking to  
12 each other. In this case, I think Department of  
13 Finance was receiving one piece of information. HPD  
14 or DOB rather was receiving another piece of  
15 information so it seems like in some cases we as a  
16 City, and I'm taking blame for this too, are not  
17 doing enough to ensure that our own processes are  
18 talking to each other and ensuring that we're not  
19 putting people displaced so I'd like to follow up if  
20 we can on that topic about ways we can improve  
21 internal agency conversations, communications. I  
22 just want to ask one more question and before I do  
23 that, I want to just say one thank you to the  
24 Chairman for putting tenants first because I think  
25 their voice is important and we've done that with the

2 NYCHA tenants and now rent stabilization as well and  
3 rent regulations to let tenants speak about their  
4 issues and we have an opportunity to talk to the  
5 agencies as well so I want to thank him for that. On  
6 terms of rent burden particularly, we have programs  
7 like SCRIE which I think are wonderful and we've  
8 expanded SCRIE in the last few years to reduce rent  
9 burden. Are there other ways either an HPD funded  
10 projects or deals or other things you're looking at  
11 to not just obviously expand rent protection where  
12 they exist already but to look at tenants that are  
13 being rent burdened and might be at risk of losing  
14 their apartment which is a good rent regulated  
15 apartment. Any tools that you're using or looking at  
16 to address the rent burden in addition to the  
17 expansion of available units?

18 MATT MURPHY: A lot of the issue around  
19 rent burden, the tools that we use are related to our  
20 preservation work. This includes tax incentives,  
21 loan programs that work together to bring financing  
22 to buildings to help improve those conditions. Along  
23 with that includes a rent setting that is at 30% of  
24 tenant income so by supporting a lot of our  
25 preservation work and by getting those tool out, one

2 of the things I'd like to mention is we are working  
3 on coming out with a new program, the neighborhood  
4 pillars program which is targeted to spend more and  
5 use more sources of financing in order to work to  
6 acquire rent stabilized buildings so this is an  
7 exciting program for us because we're working to  
8 actually compete with the market and become more  
9 targeted with our acquisitions but ultimately the  
10 goal of all of our preservation work is to get  
11 tenants in a place of a habitable home, quality and  
12 spending no more than 30% of their income on their  
13 rent.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Council Member  
16 Chin.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair and  
18 thank you to all the tenants and advocates for being  
19 here today. From your testimony, we all know that we  
20 need to continue rent regulation and all the reason  
21 that you laid out in testimony, I think residents  
22 know and advocates know and we've been saying that  
23 all along. When you look at in your testimony that  
24 the least vacancy units are the lower rent ones,  
25 everybody knows that because what's happening right

2 now is that so many market rate units are coming on-  
3 line and even some of them, they get the 421A tax  
4 incentive. They only give back 20% so there is a big  
5 discrepancy, a big gap and I remember just this past  
6 Sunday reading the *New York Times*. You look at, you  
7 know, there are all these competition going on in  
8 Brooklyn because all these market rate housings is  
9 going up and the next one is gonna be taller, they're  
10 gonna offer more amenities because they want to  
11 attract the tenants so people who can afford it,  
12 they're picking and choosing but the people who  
13 cannot afford it, they're stuck and I think in your  
14 vacancy surveys do you take a look at overcrowding  
15 cause what we see in our neighborhood is that people  
16 are doubling up, tripling up. There's no more one  
17 family living in an apartment. Often time they have  
18 to share apartment with another family just to pay  
19 they rent so that's one question. The other question  
20 is that I know that you're talking about the program  
21 to help non-profit group acquire rent regulated  
22 building or non-rent regulated building. That's  
23 great. I was very excited about that in the last  
24 hearing. One of the things I also want to raise is  
25 that HPD looking into, first of all, doing some



2 project based subsidy program where new development  
3 that developer can use that to lower the income  
4 requirement? In that way they will lower the rent.  
5 That's one thing and the other thing is to look at a  
6 subsidy that the City can do to help families who are  
7 rent burdened similar to what we have in SCRIE and  
8 DRIE but for low income family so that they can be  
9 able to meet the rent and be able to stay in their  
10 rent regulated apartment.

11 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Thank you very much so  
12 let me maybe take the first question. I'll defer to  
13 my colleagues on the follow-up question so the HVS  
14 does measure, does collect a lot of data that can  
15 help us examine different facets of crowding or  
16 doubling up. In our selected initial findings they  
17 didn't present obviously all of our wonderful numbers  
18 today but you can see the overcrowding rate from a  
19 single dimension in Table 19 of what had been  
20 previously distributed to you. For 2017 across all  
21 types of rental housing the crowing rate was 11.5% in  
22 2017 and severely crowded, that's where there's more  
23 than one and a half persons per room was a rate of  
24 4.5%. That's statistically pretty similar to what we  
25 had measured it as in 2014.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Do you break that  
3 down by the rent?

4 ELIZABETH GUMMER: We certainly can do  
5 that. I'm happy to do that as a follow-up. In our  
6 selected findings, we only show a very small number  
7 of metrics but we can do that by rent level and we're  
8 happy to do that as a follow up for you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. The  
10 other question about subsidy?

11 FRANCESC MARTI: Sure, sure, so we're  
12 rolling out a New York City 15/15 rental assistance  
13 program for supportive housing. We'll have six new  
14 staff and \$250,000 in FY18 for this program. We can  
15 arrange a brief

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, I know about  
17 the supportive housing. I'm talking about the  
18 general population about the low income families who  
19 are struggling so that they should have some kind of,  
20 before they get to the homeless shelter. If we can  
21 prevent them from, you know, becoming homeless and be  
22 able to stay in their homes. Yes, we have to look  
23 towards the State to help but if the City can do  
24 something on our own to really help these family,  
25 that's one thing and the other one is that in

2 developing more affordable unit that is for the lower  
3 income level, the City can take a look at creating a  
4 project base subsidy program that allows developers  
5 to do that.

6 FRANCESC MARTI: I think it's, I think  
7 it's a fair idea and we're happy to discuss it with  
8 you further. I think we should also be mindful right  
9 now defending Section 8 at the federal level is very  
10 important and we appreciate all your partnership and  
11 support. All these federal programs are under threat  
12 so I just say like we are focused on defending  
13 Section 8 at the federal level but we are more than  
14 happy to sit down with you and discuss I think the  
15 idea that you are putting forward right now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I mean I know  
17 that we have to defend Section 8 but while we  
18 defending that, let's also be creative

19 FRANCESC MARTI: Sure.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And find new ways  
21 to help the tenants who are suffering, who needs our  
22 support so, so that we just always be on the  
23 defensive. Let's be on the offensive too, okay.

24 FRANCESC MARTI: Yep, we're happy to talk  
25 about that, yep.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Thank  
3 you Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Council Member  
5 Williams.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you  
7 Mr. Chair. Thank you for your testimony. I just had  
8 a few things to say but you kinda surprised me on the  
9 preferential rent thing so I know you cleaned it up  
10 but I just want to make sure I'm also clear that  
11 you're supporting the changing of MCI's and IAI's and  
12 preferential rent, all of those things that the  
13 movement is usually pushing. I just want to make  
14 sure that the administration supports dealing with  
15 those or getting rid of those.

16 FRANCESC MARTI: So again, I think those  
17 are definitely issues we're gonna be looking at.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Well not just  
19 looking at it, support changing MCI's, IAI's,  
20 changing preferential rent and high rent decontrol.

21 ELIZABETH GUMMER: So as, I can just add  
22 here as somebody who has worked for HPD and worked on  
23 these issues now for several rounds of, of Albany  
24 reforms and you're looking at one of the criticals of  
25 the team members who will be doing this for, in the

2 next 15 months, that my, my component of that is  
3 doing really detailed data analysis from the HVS and  
4 from other sources to be able to help guide not just  
5 internal with the administration but also to help  
6 support just a data driven

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So I'm sorry, I  
8 have a minute and thirty seconds left. I didn't  
9 expect this to be a question because I thought it was  
10 a yes so I just want to know if those things were in  
11 concert in terms of getting rid of or fixing. That's  
12 my question.

13 FRANCESC MARTI: The answer is yes.  
14 We're gonna be looking at it. We're gonna be looking  
15 into both of those things, yep.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, okay, I  
17 just want to make sure we have that on the record  
18 because I was a little concerned.

19 FRANCESC MARTI: Yep, yep.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So this issue  
21 in particular, you know, I wouldn't be a Council  
22 Member if it wasn't for my tenant organizing days.  
23 Before Barack Obama, no one knew what it was so  
24 people would ask me if I was giving tennis lessons  
25 and I'd have to tell them no, it was actually tenant

2 organizing I was doing so I've been doing this for  
3 way back. It's very, very important to me. I do  
4 want to make sure I get to ask some of the advocates  
5 at some point. I was concerned, I guess, by the  
6 redoing of the HVS, it looks like we didn't actually  
7 lose units which I just want to make sure we're  
8 checking the validity of that cause our usual belief  
9 is that we're losing a lot of units and perhaps we're  
10 just building more luxury units and why it's  
11 compensating for what we're actually losing so I just  
12 want to get into that but I can't get into it here.  
13 Also, yes it looked like there was some good news  
14 about income raising I guess versus rent but we still  
15 have a big crunch at the bottom and I will say for  
16 the most part I think the City's doing decent as  
17 there's bones I have to pick. We did lose from your  
18 chart, particularly in the lower income in years of  
19 '14 to '17 which is one of the reasons I voted  
20 against MIH and I think this body and the Mayor  
21 failed by not making it a deeper appointment of  
22 affordability. We're finally cleaning that up now  
23 but we did lose some critical years. I'm happy the  
24 421A recapture is happening. I do want to see more  
25 happen with rent regulation so hopefully the City

2 will but I just want to put on the record and I  
3 sometimes try to use qualifying statements but I'm  
4 not here. Governor Cuomo has been a utter failure  
5 when it comes to rent regulation both on rent  
6 control, rent stabilization. This is primarily, not  
7 only, but primarily a State issue and he's thoroughly  
8 failed. There's some breaking news happening now  
9 that I hope will pressure him a little bit more but I  
10 hope he's listening because there's one thing I think  
11 he's done well is probably tenant protection unit. I  
12 will say that has done some good things. We wouldn't  
13 need it if he would do his job. The fact that he  
14 first of all failed on the 421A negotiations and took  
15 it out of the negotiations that we used to have with  
16 rent regulations is another failure. I'm just so  
17 dismayed by what I see coming out of there and I  
18 think it's deeply connected to the amounts of money  
19 that he receives from developers and landlords and I  
20 won't speak into detail but I've had reason to be  
21 traveling across the State and I've been shocked and  
22 surprised of how much the housing issue and the  
23 homeless issue in New York City is connected across  
24 the City and I want to shout out housing justice for  
25 whose trying to bridge some of those divides because

2 it all goes back to the State, particularly the  
3 gubernatorial mansion so I'm gonna continue to push  
4 the City where I can but I want to make sure we're  
5 clear on where the buck stops with this one. Thank  
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you Council  
8 Member Williams. I just want to shift to have a  
9 brief conversation about something that's not talked  
10 about much but that is quintessential to life and  
11 vibrancy in New York City and that is City wide home  
12 ownership. The City wide home ownership rate was  
13 32.4% in 2017, statistically the same as 2014. How  
14 did the City plan to preserve or create more  
15 affordable home ownership opportunities?

16 MATT MURPHY: Thank you for the question  
17 and as most know, New York City is the inverse of  
18 the rest of the country in terms of its relationship  
19 between renters and homeowners which makes us in a  
20 unique position to create home ownership policy so as  
21 an administration we do look at home ownership as  
22 both stabilizing distressed neighborhoods, a tool for  
23 that, as well as serving as a wealth building tool.  
24 It's critical. Since the start of HNY, we have  
25 financed nearly 13,000 home ownership starts. A



2 portion of those are through NYHOP and our HomeFirst  
3 program and it's our expectation by 2026 the City  
4 will produce another 10,000 home ownership units so  
5 in HNY2.0 we actually announced two new programs to  
6 confront this issue. We are excited to launch a  
7 program called Open Door which is a unique new  
8 program where we are building co-op units,  
9 affordable, two people, in the 80 to 100% AMI bracket  
10 which is about \$70,000 to \$112,000 for a family of  
11 three and that's just on the new construction side.  
12 We're also working to create the Home Fix program  
13 which is about helping mostly lower income homeowners  
14 do repairs on their homes so that they can either  
15 bring them up to a more habitable status or just work  
16 to maximize the quality of their home and maximize  
17 their asset so we are, we are working on creating  
18 this. We recognize that we're a City of renters but  
19 even still we have pockets of homeowners and we need  
20 to have tools that address their needs as well.

21 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So the overall  
22 number that you mentioned which I believe I heard you  
23 say 10,000

24 MATT MURPHY: That's the additional  
25 units, yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Right, so how much  
3 of that is new homeowners and how much of it is the  
4 Fix program that you mentioned or is there a  
5 differentiation somewhere in there?

6 MATT MURPHY: I don't have a breakdown of  
7 where the 10,000 additional would come from. I can  
8 say that in some cases we preserve mitchalama  
9 [phonetic]co-ops and the preservation of mitchalama  
10 [phonetic] co-ops are home ownership units.

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So for the new  
12 potential new homeowners in a very tough market, what  
13 is your strategy for getting the word out about new  
14 programs, about pathways to home ownership, what's  
15 the strategy for getting people enrolled in the  
16 program and helping them build wealth and capacity  
17 and all of those kinds of things.

18 MATT MURPHY: Sure, yeah, it's a great  
19 question. Part of it is building awareness. We need  
20 everybody to support that. Following affordable  
21 housing lotteries and being able to know that even if  
22 you're in the market to purchase a home, affordable  
23 housing lotteries can be for you so I encourage  
24 everybody to go visit our website and to look for our  
25 resources related to home ownership. There's also a

2 number of non-profits that focus on the home  
3 ownership. I will give a shout out to the Center for  
4 New York City neighborhoods. A lot of home ownership  
5 programs are focused on preventing foreclosure but as  
6 the market has recovered and strengthened, there are  
7 more conversations about introducing new home  
8 ownership opportunities so talking to non-profits,  
9 local community organization, talking to housing  
10 counseling agencies, coming to our website and  
11 looking on the home ownership link and following  
12 affordable housing lotteries are just some of the  
13 ways but I'd like to talk to you more about what more  
14 we could do.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yeah, so one of the  
16 things that I'm curious about is your relationship,  
17 or the administrations relationship to the use of CRA  
18 or the Community Reinvestment Act in minority  
19 communities like the one that I represent. There's a  
20 great opportunity there to get the CRA numbers up  
21 with banks in my district. We're actually doing an  
22 assessment of the banks in my district for their  
23 lending practices, both commercial and residential.  
24 I'm wondering is the City, counting that as a tool  
25

2 for increasing home ownership or are these programs  
3 operating mutually exclusive of each other?

4 MATT MURPHY: That's a great question.

5 At the moment, you know, we don't count what banks  
6 count towards CRA unless mostly if it's the financing  
7 of multi-family housing and investments in the tax  
8 write off program but it's a great opportunity. I do  
9 want to highlight a couple of things. Usually the  
10 news in regards to housing on the federal level is  
11 bad these days and I just want to point out that not  
12 a lot of people are familiar that there is a proposal  
13 to eliminate reporting by banks on just the thing you  
14 mentioned. Banks are required right now to report on  
15 the rates in the City of people that receive home  
16 mortgage loans as a way to confront past mortgage  
17 discrimination and there is a proposal to, this is  
18 called the home mortgage disclosure act, and we use  
19 this data, hone the data and I would like to talk to  
20 you more about how we can use that data more  
21 effectively. However, it's just another example of  
22 something that's at risk at the federal level and we  
23 are working to fight it because we do use this data  
24 but there's conversations about reforming the  
25 community reinvestment act, there are conversations

2 about taking away this data and, you know, we need  
3 all the support we can to continue those tools cause  
4 the Housing and Vacancy Survey shows us just how  
5 critical you need data to have these conversations.  
6 Otherwise the anecdotal evidence in regards to these  
7 issues is simply not always enough so we should talk  
8 more because there is an opportunity to work more  
9 closely with banks. We talk with banks a lot about  
10 what further investments could be made and they want  
11 to do increasing amounts of home ownership so I'd  
12 like to follow up with you about that.

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yes, it's  
14 obviously, not obviously, but it's something that  
15 we're doing in my district as a combat to the  
16 negative sides or the down sides of gentrification  
17 and it seems to be a pathway in my district. I can  
18 imagine if the weight of the entire City was brought  
19 to bear as it relates to the CRA, the difference we  
20 could possibly make so I look forward to not just on  
21 the record having this conversation but having a  
22 longer extended conversation and not just with myself  
23 but the Committee on what we can do working with our  
24 federal partners and with the Act so thank you.

25 MATT MURPHY: Great, thanks.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Council Member  
3 Gjonaj.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Chair, I just  
5 want to thank you for this very important hearing and  
6 my colleagues for bringing up some very important  
7 issues and topics. You mentioned your testimony of  
8 SCRIE and DRIE. Can you please tell me your feelings  
9 or your thoughts on the success of those two  
10 programs?

11 FRANCESC MARTI: So we're actually very  
12 proud of the recent expansion in SCRIE. The State  
13 legislature passed an expansion to \$50,000 and we  
14 implemented it locally and, you know, this is a, this  
15 is a success in making sure that more seniors can  
16 stay in their homes. In regards to the SCRIE  
17 program, DOF administers the SCRIE program for rent  
18 regulated units. We do it for (Inaudible) and  
19 ACFC's. We'd be happy to like sit down with you and  
20 go over more detail about that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: But overall these  
22 are very successful and important programs to make  
23 sure that our seniors and disability, those suffering  
24 from various disabilities remain in their homes and  
25 not allowing their rent to increase is significant.

2 FRANCESC MARTI: Absolutely, yeah.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Okay.

4 ELIZABETH GUMMER: So I can also add that  
5 HES collects data on the population receiving SCRIE.  
6 We have not incorporated questions on DRIE but one of  
7 the things that we'd be happy to follow up on is as  
8 we get to the point where we're evaluating and  
9 analyzing the impact of SCRIE over time of sharing  
10 any findings we have with you on that program.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Because I feel  
12 the same way, making sure that those two programs  
13 remain viable are important to the wellbeing of this  
14 City. Would your department be open to discuss  
15 extending those programs or those protections to  
16 every day New Yorkers where we would cut rents and  
17 it's known as the TRUE Bill, Tenant Red Ink Exemption  
18 Program where if more than half of their rent is  
19 going toward rent, and here it's a third, that we  
20 would cap those rents and not let things get  
21 progressively worse for those very vulnerable  
22 families.

23 FRANCESC MARTI: So we are always happy  
24 to review any legislative proposal. I just want to  
25 be clear that we are laser focused on strengthening

2 the rent laws in Albany next year. That is our focus  
3 and we don't think there's any substitute for that so  
4 we just want to be clear about that. We are familiar  
5 with the proposal you are discussing TRUE. You know,  
6 I, the proposal would be administered by DOF so they  
7 could speak better about it. However, we are  
8 familiar with certain fiscal concerns, significant  
9 fiscal concerns with it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Fiscal concerns,  
11 we're talking about the wellbeing of keeping New  
12 Yorkers in their home and making sure that they don't  
13 become displaced and homeless, isn't that the intent  
14 here?

15 FRANCESC MARTI: We believe that the best  
16 way of achieving that is strengthening the rent laws  
17 in Albany next year.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, if you're one  
19 of the fortunate families that has a rent stabilized  
20 apartment, you're protected and the other New York  
21 City residents, we turn around and say sorry, you  
22 didn't draw the luck and we can't help you. Is that  
23 the intent?

24

25



2 FRANCESC MARTI: Well, we, we can  
3 certainly discuss proposal with you and we're more  
4 than happy to do that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So let's clarify  
6 the position. It's more than making sure that the  
7 rent protections remain in place but making sure that  
8 all New Yorkers can afford to live in this great City  
9 and not be forced into the streets.

10 FRANCESC MARTI: I mean, again, I would

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: And that should  
12 be the primary objective I would imagine.

13 FRANCESC MARTI: Yes, again we believe  
14 that strengthening the rent laws is the best way of  
15 achieving that but we are more than happy to discuss  
16 the specifics or the TRUE proposal with you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Let me reiterate  
18 one more time, we have many more apartments that are  
19 not subject to rent stabilization and those families  
20 are in current need of assistance and helping secure  
21 a roof over their heads should be the primary goal,  
22 not just there for the rent stabilize, rent control  
23 tenants. There has to be a much broader approach but  
24 I'll take that up with you at a later time. One of  
25 the other issues that I do want to bring up is the

2 same group of people that we're looking to help  
3 through rent protections and making sure that RGB  
4 increases don't force these vulnerable families out  
5 of their homes, one of the issues that I see works  
6 counter to that is the water and sewer and real  
7 estate tax increases that are passed on to property  
8 owners and therefore passed on to tenants so on one  
9 hand we say we need to strengthen rent protections,  
10 make sure rents remain affordable and that they don't  
11 increase out of control forcing families to relocate,  
12 on the other end we raise the operating cost of  
13 buildings to make sure that we hurt those very  
14 existing tenants that we're looking to help. Water  
15 and sewer rates are over \$1,000 an apartment  
16 annually. That is more than fuel. Your real estate  
17 taxes imposed on the same rent stabilized tenant that  
18 you're looking to protect are about \$3,000 annually.  
19 These are double digit increases across the board so  
20 when are we gonna start addressing the underlying  
21 issues. Are we here to help these tenants or hurt  
22 them and under the guise of RGB saying we did our  
23 part but those lambs[phonetic] are gonna pass on  
24 those increases and make sure that those tenants and  
25 families pay for these increases.

2 MATT MURPHY: So the issue around  
3 operating expense increases, RGB, from my  
4 understanding looks at annually when setting the  
5 increase in the one year or two year leases. There's  
6 a report that's done on operating expenses and how  
7 they are going up and down. In terms of affordable  
8 housing, real estate tax exemptions are used in order  
9 to keep costs down so in order to house the lower  
10 income tenants we're talking about, the City does  
11 provide an operating subsidy by exempting property  
12 taxes. It's an incentive for people to participate

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: By unstabilized  
14 apartments, the one million apartments that we want  
15 to protect. Those same one million apartments are  
16 subject to increases on water and sewer rates by New  
17 York City on real estate taxes by New York City.  
18 They are passed along and I'll paint the picture for  
19 you. City charges landlord, landlord charges tenant,  
20 tenant pay landlord, landlord pays City. Who's the  
21 culprit? It's not the landlord. He's the middle man  
22 and these increases are a direct correlation to the  
23 rent increases that those rent stabilized tenants  
24 that you're trying to protect, will ultimately pay  
25 for. I also believe rent stabilization in the one

2 million apartments that are available are not enough  
3 and I agree that this is a battle of supply versus  
4 demand and New York City's not gonna build its way  
5 out of this on its own that there has to be a more  
6 willing partnership with a private industry creating  
7 the incentive for them to build more apartments which  
8 eventually to stabilizing of rents and eventually  
9 making sure that all New Yorkers can afford to live  
10 here should also have some type of needs testing to  
11 make sure that those that should be getting the  
12 protections do have the protections and ensuring  
13 future generations can thrive here so I want to thank  
14 you both for your time. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Council Member  
16 Rivera.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you and  
18 that you Chair for asking about home ownership. I  
19 know those opportunities in moderate income  
20 communities are far and few in between so I wanted to  
21 ask about the survey. So compared to previous  
22 surveys, the number of rent controlled units was  
23 actually less and I'd like to know why does there  
24 continue to be a loss of these units and whether HVS  
25 has data on the causes?

2 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Sure, so in my  
3 previous answer about rent control I explained that  
4 this is the first generation of rent regulated units  
5 where the current occupants had, in fact have to be  
6 by definition, the first occupants or the first  
7 occupant successors and have lived continuously in  
8 that unit since July 1, 1971. That means that when  
9 those units, when those first occupants exit those  
10 units they transition to being rent stabilized so the  
11 number of rent controlled units naturally declines  
12 over time as those initial occupants who have been  
13 living there for several decades give up those  
14 apartments but the overall supply of rent regulated  
15 units which comprises both rent control and rent  
16 stabilized remains intact according to our data.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well based on my  
18 very humble experience housing organizing and I see  
19 some of my friends here and we've done a lot of work  
20 around this, I think some of the causes are the same  
21 for rent stabilization as they are even for rent  
22 control and that's, that's deprivation of services,  
23 that's frivolous litigations, that's harassment. I  
24 want to ask about repairs. You said that the agency  
25 issued 5,000 violations.

2 MATT MURPHY: I believe it was 473,000.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: 473,000

4 violations in how long?

5 MATT MURPHY: Think that was fiscal year  
6 '17 but if you give me a moment, I'll give you the  
7 exact number.

8 FRANCESC MARTI: We can also confirm that  
9 for you after that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: He's going to  
11 confirm it for me right now.

12 MATT MURPHY: In fiscal year '17, we  
13 issued more than 481,000 violations.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Okay, that sounds  
15 right, so these violations do you know how many of  
16 them were gathered because of an HP action?

17 MATT MURPHY: I don't have that  
18 information in front of me but I can say that we have  
19 brought 6,371 cases to housing court. A portion of  
20 those cases I believe are going to be an HP action  
21 but this is data we can follow up with you with.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: That would be  
23 great. I know that when people are taking their  
24 landlord to court, sometimes all the time and the  
25 energy that they spend in court and the vindication

2 that they get is still almost worthless because the  
3 repairs don't come and they have to go back to court  
4 and then go back to court and that's a loss of wages,  
5 that's a loss of time and the stress on these tenants  
6 is unbelievable so I see here that it says since 2014  
7 the administration funded legal services for 180,000  
8 low income tenants facing eviction. That seems a  
9 little bit low. I'd love to see that broken down and  
10 I'd love to see how many people are actually in court  
11 who are I guess categorized as low income and how  
12 many actually receive legal services. I know there's  
13 criteria and there's eligibility around it but I know  
14 how many families are in court and that just seems  
15 like, I know we have to do our part but if you can  
16 give me a breakdown of who is receiving those  
17 services according to income and according to  
18 borough, I would really appreciate that.

19 MATT MURPHY: Okay, our partners at HRA  
20 run the programs so let us communicate with them and  
21 let you know of your request and we'll get back to  
22 you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: And then the last  
24 thing I'll just say is I want to echo some of my  
25 colleagues here who talked about the joint effort so

2 whether it's with HRA or HCR or DOB, this is really a  
3 time where I feel like our tenants are constantly  
4 under attack and finally for, I guess for example,  
5 Kushner to get some press around the false  
6 certification you said it was disappointing and I  
7 think it's more than disappointing. It's criminal so  
8 for the people here who have been fighting  
9 Westminster for years, I have to say, you know, time  
10 is up for a lot of these guys and we're gonna need  
11 your help so thank you so much for your time.

12 MATT MURPHY: Thank you and I absolutely  
13 agree and this is why the harassment taskforces exist  
14 is to actually look into potentially criminal  
15 behavioral as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Council  
17 Member Rosenthal.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you very  
19 much. Thank you Chair Cornegy for chairing this  
20 hearing. It's incredibly important and I so  
21 appreciate Speaker Johnson and of course the  
22 administration moving forward on his two resolutions  
23 bills. I want to follow up on Council Member  
24 Rivera's question. When you saw a decrease in rent  
25 controlled apartments, did you see a corresponding



2 increase in rent stabilized apartments or can you  
3 track to see whether or not that actually happened?

4 ELIZABETH GUMMER: So the data that we  
5 currently are analyzing and that we've shared today  
6 are first findings is cross sectional so it's only  
7 point in time. It does not enable us to say where  
8 those units had come from or what is happening to  
9 them. However, the HVS also is in its design a  
10 longitude mill data set and so with 2017, we will be  
11 able to analyze some of these trends and transitions  
12 over time between 2011, 14 and 17. Unfortunately, we  
13 don't have those data yet and we'll get them later  
14 this summer after the 2017 data themselves are  
15 released by the Census Bureau but we'd be more than  
16 happy to follow up and look at what has happened to  
17 the units that had been rent controlled in earlier  
18 waves and what happened to them after they  
19 transitioned.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: That'd be  
21 great. Hypothetically, do you have a data field that  
22 captures brand new rent stabilized apartments?

23 ELIZABETH GUMMER: I'm not quite sure  
24 that I understand your question but let me do my best  
25 to answer it so we certainly just as we discuss rent

2 control, we can look at over time what, how units  
3 transition from one category to another with that  
4 special longitudinal file.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

6 ELIZABETH GUMMER: The 2017 data  
7 themselves don't allow us to look at that change.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Got you and  
9 when do you expect the full data to be available to  
10 the public?

11 ELIZABETH GUMMER: So the 2017 data will  
12 likely be released in June which is similar to what  
13 our standard cycle is for an HVS wave. The  
14 longitudinal data will be prepared sometime after  
15 that, probably late in the summer, is when we expect  
16 to get a first copy of those data back at HPD.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, one of  
18 my concerns and the reason Council Member Rivera's  
19 point really struck me is because I have a building  
20 in my district where the landlord is trying very  
21 hard, new landlord, new building owner came in and is  
22 trying very hard to pressure the tenants who are rent  
23 controlled to sign rent stabilization leases with the  
24 intent of demolishing the building, you know, then  
25 moving to the phase of saying well, we're gonna

2 rebuild this and now everyone's out so is that, can  
3 that type of situation be captured by your office in  
4 a different way or how do you keep track of those  
5 situations?

6 ELIZABETH GUMMER: So the HVS itself is  
7 really, it is designed to do many things but it  
8 really focuses on City wide borough trends of these  
9 major conditions and the things that are defined by  
10 both local and State law. It, of course, goes above  
11 and beyond that but it can't do everything and so we  
12 are not able to look at the intersection of those  
13 particular issues in that survey. I will say that my  
14 division separately does a lot of analysis of  
15 different data. We haven't specifically looked at  
16 this idea of decontrol and demolition in the  
17 intersection of those particular things in the way  
18 you're describing but we're always trying to  
19 understand what are the critical issues that everyone  
20 is seeing so that we can identify the best data and  
21 methodology and we're certainly happy to think about  
22 that with you and

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I'd love  
24 to add that one to your list and wouldn't it be true  
25 that you'd have to work with the DOB data, right,

2 because they'll have the permits for demolition or,  
3 you know.

4 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Yeah, it very much  
5 like our program areas have to work together with  
6 agencies of data and research people also have to  
7 collaborate to make, get the right data.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Do your data,  
9 do your package, software package, do your data  
10 packages speak to each other? Can you use DOB data  
11 in your analysis?

12 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Certainly my division  
13 works with all kinds of data from all different  
14 agencies.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: But they just,  
16 I'm just curious, they just updated to DOB Now or  
17 whatever. Is that in your

18 ELIZABETH GUMMER: People, people in my  
19 division access back end so those kinds of changes  
20 don't alter our ability to be able to talk together  
21 in this data.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So  
23 specifically, so HPD and DOB address by address  
24 information could hypothetically speak to each other  
25 and

2 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Sure, the researchers  
3 who work on my team use all kinds of data all the  
4 time and we also share with other researchers at  
5 other agencies and outside of the City and all of  
6 those things can work together.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great, thank  
8 you so much for your time and your efforts. Thank  
9 you, Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: We're gonna go to a  
11 second round. Council Member Williams has a second  
12 round of questions.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you,  
14 kinda I wasn't expecting to come up right now. I did  
15 just want to make sure I put on the record also,  
16 sometime we're talking about rent stabilization, rent  
17 control, just rent regulation in general, we are  
18 talking about the price point and I was make sure I  
19 put on the record that it's also the protections that  
20 come with it and that people forget to discuss and  
21 it's important because when I was an organizer and  
22 people would come for assistance I would have to say,  
23 are you rent regulated or you're not, because if you  
24 aren't I can help you get through the peer, but the  
25 landlord may not give you a release renewal and we

2 may or may not be able to prove that it's connected  
3 and so I always want to make sure when we're  
4 discussing and having these talking points that the  
5 protections that are afforded to tenants in rent  
6 regulation are very important to that community and  
7 shouldn't just be connected to a price point. I  
8 think I had another question but it's been jogged out  
9 of my head but I wanted to make sure that was there.  
10 Also, just to recorrect some of my earlier statement  
11 just for my clarification, I think the Governor has  
12 utterly failed tenants in the City and across the  
13 State, not just rent regulated. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I think you made  
15 that abundantly clear, Council Member.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I think I said  
17 rent regulated. I just wanted to make sure I  
18 captured the whole thing.

19 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. If  
20 there are no more questions, thank you so much for  
21 your testimony.

22 MATT MURPHY: Thank you.

23 FRANCESC MARTI: Thank you.

24 ELIZABETH GUMMER: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Look forward to  
3 working with you and I'll follow up especially on the  
4 home ownership piece.

5 MATT MURPHY: Thank you Chair, thanks.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'm gonna call the  
7 next panel. Norma Shrier [phonetic], Cynthia Chafee,  
8 Abigail Martinez and Marcella I'm sorry I can't  
9 pronounce your last name. Miteriz [phonetic]  
10 Marcella, I'm sorry. Thank you.

11 NORMA SHRIER: Good afternoon

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: You have to press  
13 the button in and I'm glad you started cause we  
14 actually intended to go from that side to that side  
15 so.

16 NORMA SHRIER: Good afternoon. Thank you  
17 Speaker Johnson and Chair Cornegy for your continued  
18 support for stronger rent laws and the opportunity

19 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'm sorry, hold one  
20 second please. If you can, take the conversation  
21 outside please. We are still in session. Thank you.

22 NORMA SHRIER: And the opportunity to  
23 speak to the Committee today. My name is Norma  
24 Shrier and I am a member of the Rent Controlled  
25 Tenants Leadership Committee at Tenants and

2 Neighbors. I am here to speak in support of  
3 Resolution 188-A and Intro #600-A. I am a rent  
4 controlled tenant living on the Upper West side in  
5 the same apartment I moved into with my now deceased  
6 husband 50 years ago, now living with my disabled  
7 daughter and I'm here today to testify on behalf of  
8 the approximately 50,000 rent controlled tenants  
9 remaining in 22,000 units in New York, down 4,000  
10 since the previous HVS. We call ourselves the  
11 forgotten rent regulated tenants but perhaps now we  
12 won't be forgotten because there are about one  
13 million rent stabilized apartments left in New York  
14 so we do not get much attention. This year rent  
15 controlled tenants lobbied Governor Cuomo for a rent  
16 freeze, even stopped traffic in front of his office.  
17 A bunch of septuagenarians and octogenarians and  
18 spent the day in jail because we are so desperate to  
19 bring attention to the rent control issue. We  
20 believe that the MBR system that controls rent  
21 adjustments for rent controlled tenants is outdated,  
22 unsustainable and inhumane. Think about this, in the  
23 eight years of Governor Cuomo's administration, my  
24 rent has increased a whopping 44%, I repeat 44%. In  
25 the same time rent stabilized tenants rent has



2 increased only 12%. The same economic conditions  
3 that exist in the City for rent stabilized tenants  
4 and their landlords exist also for rent controlled  
5 tenants. Why the discrepancy? Here's another  
6 thought. In 1975 there were 642,000 rent controlled  
7 apartments in the City compared to 22,000 currently.  
8 Some are folded into rent stabilization but others  
9 due to the MBR system that controls this form of rent  
10 regulation and if the landlord is not too lazy to  
11 file the papers each year, most of our rents are more  
12 than that deregulation threshold for rent regulation  
13 which is \$2,700 per month. The biennial MBR factor  
14 at 7.4% for which we just received an announcement  
15 from the DACR is much too high for rent controlled  
16 tenants in my tenants and neighbors group and the  
17 broader rent controlled community with this increase,  
18 tenants will continue to pay annual rent increases  
19 with no end in sight and the MBR which is a promise  
20 of greater economic security will continue to remain  
21 elusive. I leave you with this, the majority of rent  
22 controlled tenants are senior citizens living on a  
23 fixed income and their median income is \$28,000 per  
24 year. They have experienced the burden of up to 7.5%  
25 rent increases each year along with fuel pass-alongs

2 and the unjust burden of higher MCI percentages at  
3 15% for major capital improving increases. Though  
4 the discrete threshold has been lifted which helped  
5 some of us, unfortunately by the time that happened,  
6 most of us had already lost our quality of life.  
7 Thank you.

8 ABIGAIL MARTINEZ: Buenas tardes,  
9 [speaking in Spanish] Gracias.

10 TRANSLATOR: I'm going to be translating  
11 the testimonial. My name is Abigail Martinez and I  
12 am with Neighbors Helping Neighbors. I moved into  
13 680 53<sup>rd</sup> Street in Sunset Park in 2014 with my  
14 husband and my four children between the ages of 2  
15 and 11 years old. My rent was \$2,200 when I first  
16 moved in. I had help with a roommate who paid \$1,100  
17 toward rent. When my roommate left, I lost my  
18 supplemental rent and I looked for help. With  
19 Neighbors Helping Neighbors, I learned that my  
20 apartment was rent stabilized and that I have rights.  
21 When I reviewed my rent history, I discovered the  
22 landlord was reporting my rent as \$643.50 and the  
23 prior tenant was only paying \$588.89 for rent. I  
24 learned I could file a complaint with the State to  
25 determine the legal rent amount and in October of

2 2017, the State determined that the landlord had  
3 overcharged me in the amount of \$54,000 and ordered  
4 my legal rent rolled back from \$2,200 to \$588.89.  
5 Landlords are taking advantage of tenants who are  
6 unaware of their rights. If I were not in a rent  
7 stabilized apartment, I would not have had the  
8 opportunity to challenge the legal rent amount. To  
9 truly make a difference, we must repeal vacancy  
10 destabilization which acts as an incentive to  
11 landlords like mine to illegally raise rents past the  
12 threshold to convert affordable units to market rate.  
13 I support Resolution 188-A and Intro 600-A. I want  
14 to thank the Speaker Corey Johnson for helping the  
15 tenant movement apply pressure to Albany to try and  
16 close some of these loopholes in the State and City  
17 laws and for understanding that merely renewing the  
18 City rent laws in their weakened state is not an  
19 adequate response to the affordability crisis we are  
20 now experiencing throughout the five boroughs and I  
21 want to thank my Councilman Carlos Menchaca for his  
22 support of the tenants in Sunset Park.

23 CYNTHIA CHAFFEY: Hello, okay, sorry  
24 thank you. My name is Cynthia Chaffey and I am the  
25 co-foundress of the Stop Croman Coalition and also a

2 member of GOALS[phonetic] and we fully support  
3 Resolution 188-A and Intro 600-A. On behalf of the  
4 Stop Croman Coalition, I am happy to be able to  
5 present testimony to the City Council and we are  
6 especially thankful to Corey Johnson, the Speaker,  
7 for his efforts in leadership to facilitate a  
8 campaign to put pressure on Albany to close the  
9 loopholes and weaknesses in the State and City rent  
10 laws that allow landlords to remove apartments from  
11 rent regulations and charge exorbitant rents that the  
12 working people of New York City cannot afford to live  
13 in. I believe that Corey Johnson fully understands  
14 that without the strengthening of the rent laws, we  
15 will continue to lose rent stabilized units to the  
16 point of extinction. Our landlord, Steve Croman, is  
17 a convicted felon and is currently serving one year  
18 in jail due to mortgage fraud. Also a civil suit  
19 brought by the Attorney General's office on behalf of  
20 tenants who suffered extreme harassment was brought  
21 by the Attorney General's office and was recently  
22 settled. Under the terms of this settlement, he will  
23 have to relinquish the management of 106 of his  
24 properties to a new management company selected by  
25 the Attorney General. Steve Croman has an empire of

close to 200 buildings in Manhattan. His motive of sopharenda [phonetic] has been to acquire buildings and then begin to start the harassment of rent stabilized tenants to get them out, raise rents and deregulate apartments under the vacancy decontrol laws. He has been able to empty out most of the rent regulated tenants out of all his buildings. Vacancy decontrol gives him an incentive to get tenants out using harassment techniques, tactics excuse me, which, I'm sorry, I have my asthma today, which included frivolous litigation, depravation of services, use of private agents known as tenant relocation specialists to aggressively pursue buyout offers even when the agents were told by the tenants that they were not interested. One example is Raymond Miskell. He's an 85 year old tenant and had lived in his rent controlled apartment for 68 years. Croman bought the building and defrauded him of his succession rights and thus his apartment was stolen from him. He's now living out his remaining years in a Salvation Army residence which is also closing and he will be uprooted again. Croman's victims are too numerous to mention. You may read more examples on our website [www.stopcromancoalition.org](http://www.stopcromancoalition.org). Go to the

2 section called vulnerable. Vacancy decontrol has  
3 been the engine of displacement and gentrification in  
4 our neighborhoods. This incentive has to be  
5 eliminated together with the preferential rent  
6 loopholes and the statutory vacancy bonus which gives  
7 the landlords 20% automatic rent increases upon a  
8 vacancy. The Stop Croman Coalition and I thank Corey  
9 Johnson for his leadership and we call upon Mayor de  
10 Blasio to help mobilize the City to put pressure on  
11 Governor Cuomo to make this fight a priority. Thank  
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you so much  
14 for your testimony.

15 CYNTHIA CHAFFEY: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'm gonna call the  
17 next panel - Bareka [phonetic] Williams, Leno Diaz,  
18 Ellen Davidson, Exona Miranova [phonetic].

19 [pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you all for  
21 joining us today. You can begin your testimonies  
22 when, when you're ready.

23 Thank you for this opportunity to comment  
24 on the vital importance of rent control and rent  
25 stabilization laws for New York City's tenants. My

2 name is Exona Miranova and I'm a housing policy  
3 analyst at the Community Service Society an  
4 independent non-profit organization that addresses  
5 some of the most urgent problems facing low income  
6 New Yorkers in our communities including the effect  
7 of the City's chronic housing shortage. Rent control  
8 and rent stabilization are fundamentally a response  
9 to this chronic shortage which creates a severe power  
10 and balance between tenants and landlords. The  
11 primary purpose of the law is to prevent landlords  
12 from exploiting this imbalance to impose large rate  
13 increases and arbitrary evictions. This is a matter  
14 of simple justice, even before we considered the  
15 effects of rent regulation on affordability. This  
16 alone should be a sufficient reason for this  
17 Committee, the City Council, and the Mayor to extend  
18 the laws as they are authorized to do under State  
19 law. Unfortunately, the affordability the rent laws  
20 provide falls short of what the City needs partially  
21 as a result of specific loopholes within the law,  
22 vacancy deregulation, the vacancy bonus and  
23 preferential rents. Beyond extending the laws, I  
24 hope that you will join tenants and advocates who  
25 will be speaking to strengthen the rent laws on the

1 State level this year. While the rent laws are not  
2 an affordable housing program per se, they do help  
3 stabilize rental costs which makes them more  
4 accessible to low income people. The median  
5 household income in rent stabilized apartment was  
6 about \$44,000 in 2016 as compared to \$67,000 in  
7 unregulated units, a 40% difference. Importantly the  
8 rent laws create a mechanism to mitigate the immense  
9 pressure of the rental market on tenants. They allow  
10 the Rent Guidelines Board to take into account the  
11 economic situation when they set rent adjustments.  
12 The skyrocketing rental market in 2015 and 2016, the  
13 RGB enacted two rent freezes. This had an impact.  
14 The median rent for rent stabilized apartments rose  
15 from \$1,237 in 2014 to \$1,269 an increase of just  
16 2.6% above inflation. In comparison, median rents in  
17 unregulated apartments rose from \$1,546 to \$1,700 or  
18 10% above inflation. The two rent freezes have had  
19 immeasurable impact on low income New Yorkers. In  
20 2017, as part of CSS's annual unheard third survey,  
21 we asked low income renters to rank how much of a  
22 problem affordable rent was to them. This year of  
23 the rent regulated renters reporting a very serious  
24 or somewhat serious problem with affordability  
25



2 decreased by 13% from 2015 to 2017. In comparison,  
3 the share of unregulated renters reporting a very to  
4 somewhat serious problem declined by only 2%. As a  
5 broad based program focusing on fairness rather than  
6 subsidy, rent regulation has an important place in  
7 our City's housing policy system. I urge you to pass  
8 the Introduction and Resolution in front of you  
9 today.

10 Good afternoon, my name is Ellen  
11 Davidson. I'm a staff attorney at the Legal Aid  
12 Society and I want to thank the Housing and Buildings  
13 Committee, the Speaker Johnson, and particularly  
14 Chair Cornegy who has lead this Committee and remains  
15 here today with us. Look, I mean the real question  
16 for this Committee is, is the vacancy rate under 5%.  
17 If so, as the law requires, you must declare a  
18 housing emergency. I think the HVS has answered that  
19 question. It's 3.63% and so I have written testimony  
20 which goes on for ten pages which I'm not going to go  
21 through. There are a couple of things I want to put  
22 on the record. Last week the Coalition for the  
23 Homeless put out a report on the state of  
24 homelessness and one of the things they looked at was  
25 the most recent HVS and they had this statistic which

2 I found unbearable sad. In 1999, there were 1.1 low  
3 income households that needed affordable apartments  
4 renting for under \$800. At the time, there were 1.35  
5 million apartments which rented for under \$800 a  
6 month. Today, there are 867,000 households who need  
7 apartments that are renting for under \$800 a month  
8 and according to the recently released HVS, there are  
9 now 350,000 apartments renting for under \$800. That  
10 is in less than 20 years, we have lost a million  
11 apartments affordable to low income New Yorkers. You  
12 know, the law says that we need to have the rent laws  
13 to prevent exactions of unjust, unreasonable and  
14 oppressive rents in rental agreements and to force  
15 stall profiteering speculation and other disruptive  
16 practices tending to produce threats to public health  
17 safety, general welfare, and that in order to prevent  
18 uncertainty, hardship and dislocation, the provisions  
19 of this act are necessary. Those words are as true  
20 today as they were in 1974 and we ask this Council,  
21 this Committee and this Council to enact and extend  
22 the rent laws. Thank you.

23 Good afternoon. My name is Bareka  
24 Williams. I'm the Deputy Director at the Association  
25 for Neighborhood and Housing Development and ANHD's

2 mission is to advance equitable flourishing  
3 neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. I want to say  
4 thank you first to you Chair Cornegy, to the Speaker  
5 and to the Committee for having us here to testify on  
6 this issue. ANHD as has been said by so many others  
7 supports the Resolution and the law before you and  
8 urges the Council to pass the local law and the  
9 Resolution. I don't want to repeat what other folks  
10 have said so I just want to hone in on a couple of  
11 things. It has been suggested by some in the press  
12 that the dire affordability crisis in New York City  
13 is in some way lessening and while the housing  
14 vacancy rate has slightly increased, interpreting  
15 that as affordability increasing across New York City  
16 would be a misreading of what the Housing Vacancy  
17 Survey shows. What we see is a continued tale of two  
18 cities. There's a surplus of luxury high cost  
19 housing that is largely unregulated and where rent  
20 burden is declining but for the average New York City  
21 resident, the vast majority of our households in the  
22 City, there's a shrinking number of low cost units,  
23 new market rate construction is out of reach and the  
24 rent burden is worsening. Specifically, the vacancy  
25 rate in every single housing category except for

2 private unregulated stock has been worsening so all  
3 of the change that we see in the vacancy rate is  
4 attributed to the increase of private unregulated  
5 stock. In addition, what we do see also is that the  
6 average New York City renter can only afford the  
7 averaged stabilized rent. They cannot afford the  
8 average private unregulated units rent so the median  
9 income of a New York City resident is about \$1,269,  
10 \$1,300 that translates into, sorry, is \$47,000 in  
11 income that translates into \$1,200 in rent and there  
12 is a big gap between that and about the \$1,700 that  
13 we see in the private market so again, I'd like to  
14 just say ANHD urges the Council to pass the two bills  
15 before you and thank you for the opportunity to  
16 speak.

17 LEON DIAZ: Good afternoon. My name is  
18 Leno Diaz. I'm a housing attorney at Legal Services  
19 New York City in the Queens Borough Office. Thank  
20 you very much for the opportunity to speak today.  
21 Rent regulation provides one of the few protections  
22 for New Yorkers in retaining and maintaining  
23 affordable housing. While the median asking rent for  
24 an apartment jumped 33.9% between 2014 and 2017, the  
25 only jumped by 2.6% in rent regulated units. For

2 families with fixed incomes or dollars that fluctuate  
3 seasonally, the security is a key component to having  
4 a stable home and a stable home provides everyone in  
5 the household with a number of intangible benefits.  
6 The ability for children to remain in their current  
7 school district without having to uproot, the ability  
8 for people of all ages to form community ties and  
9 take part in their neighborhoods and most  
10 importantly, the ability to feel safe and secure  
11 without market forces leaving people uncertain about  
12 where they'll lay their heads at night. Without an  
13 extension of rent stabilization protections,  
14 thousands of low income and working families would  
15 almost immediately be forced into the City shelter  
16 system. I work in Queens, a borough where there is a  
17 large percentage of unregulated housing and as a  
18 results, a large number of evictions based solely on  
19 the whims of the landlords. Rent regulation ensures  
20 that tenants are able to remain in their homes as  
21 evictions are restricted to causes specified by law.  
22 Rent stabilized tenants also have the right to lease  
23 renews and succession rights for remaining family  
24 members, rights that ensure that affordable housing  
25 doesn't simply disappear as a result of market

2 forces. These protections aren't hypothetical. I  
3 fought those battles and ensured that children retain  
4 the home that they've lived in all their lives and  
5 succeed in tenancies where their families have  
6 resided for multiple generations, have argued against  
7 frivolous proceedings and ensured that people aren't  
8 evicted simply because the landlord is litigious.  
9 These protections are real, important and necessary.  
10 I personally ensured that a senior citizen remained  
11 in her home where a landlord tried to evict her for  
12 allegedly always paying her rent late, retaining her  
13 housing and fighting off the unfair proceeding  
14 brought against her. By the same token, I've seen  
15 families enter the shelter system when evicted  
16 without cause from the unregulated housing because  
17 they've had no rent regulation protections. I've had  
18 to represent people with newborns as well as parents  
19 of children with severe mental disabilities who were  
20 all evicted. I had the unfortunate luck of just  
21 litigating a case where a woman who has limited  
22 functionality of her hands and her severely mentally  
23 incapacitated son was evicted by her landlord for no  
24 reason. The premises were not rent stabilized and  
25 her protections were non-existent. Now I have a bit

2 more but it's in the written statement and for the  
3 time being I'd just like to say that without the  
4 continued protection of rent stabilization, the  
5 situation would be far, far worse. We therefore  
6 thank the City Council for addressing this important  
7 issue and look forward to continuing our work helping  
8 the residents of New York City.

9 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your  
10 testimony and more importantly thank you for the hard  
11 work that you do on behalf of all of the tenants who  
12 need advocacy and the hard work that you put in.  
13 Want to call the next panel, Delcinia [phonetic]  
14 Glover, Hosea Ruiz Rodriguez, Scott Hutchens, Ed  
15 Viera, [phonetic] Jr. and Susan Steinburg.

16 DELCINIA GLOVER: Excuse me?

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you to those  
18 who stayed to testify. I know it's been a long day  
19 but it's important to have your testimony. Although  
20 other members have other hearings that they've had to  
21 attend, your testimony will be registered on the  
22 record in, you know, in perpetuity so thank you so  
23 much for staying no matter what the volume of Council  
24 Members is.

2 DELCINIA GLOVER: Okay, can I start,  
3 should I start?

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Absolutely.

5 DELCINIA GLOVER: Thank you. Good  
6 afternoon, thank you for the opportunity to submit  
7 testimony today. My name is Delcinia Glover and I am  
8 the Director of Education and Organizing for New York  
9 State Tenants and Neighbors Information Service and  
10 New York State Tenants and Neighbors Coalition which  
11 are two affiliate organizations that share a common  
12 mission which is to build a powerful unified State  
13 wide organization that empowers and educates tenants.  
14 Tenants and Neighbors is testifying today in support  
15 of Resolution #188-A and Intro #600-A for the renewal  
16 of the rent stabilization rent control laws and I am  
17 here also to advocate along with the Broad Tenant and  
18 Affordable Housing Movement for the strengthening of  
19 the rent laws. I would like to thank Speaker Corey  
20 Johnson for advocating for the strengthening of the  
21 rent laws and the Chair of the Housing and Buildings  
22 Committee, Robert Cornegy and all of the members of  
23 the Housing and Buildings Committee for agreeing to  
24 be allied in this essential fight for the soul and  
25 future of New York. The data that has been released



2 in the Housing and Vacancy Survey outlines the severe  
3 housing crisis that low and moderate income tenants  
4 are facing in New York. In the past three years, the  
5 asking rent has risen by 30%. Rent burdens have  
6 grown and the number of apartments renting for below  
7 \$1,000 decreased by 87,720 units. This is the  
8 experience of our members and tenants across the City  
9 suffering because of a crisis of loss of  
10 affordability and weak rent laws. We are here today  
11 to also call on Albany to not just renew the rent  
12 laws but strengthen them as well as fix a broken  
13 system. We are calling for the elimination of the  
14 vacancy bonus. We called it the eviction bonus,  
15 reform preferential rents and major capital  
16 improvements and ensure that the rent laws serve the  
17 protection and stability of neighborhoods rather than  
18 promoting a fertile ground for speculative investment  
19 and tenant displacement and in support of Norma  
20 Shrier, one of our tenant members who spoke earlier,  
21 the rent control tenants residing in the remaining  
22 22,000 should be given at least a two year rent  
23 freeze and get rid of the horrendous MBR system and  
24 that is a message for Governor Cuomo. Thank you very  
25 much for the opportunity to testify today.

2 HOSEA RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon, my name  
3 is Hosea Rodriguez, a member of Picture the Homeless.  
4 I would like to thank the Speaker Corey Johnson and  
5 the City Council for strengthening the rent laws.  
6 The Housing and Vacancy Survey has many New Yorkers  
7 concerned by the findings. Sixty-five additional  
8 units are not available to rent. Medium axiom rents  
9 increased 30% since 2014. Picture the Homeless is  
10 asking the City Council to pass Intro 226 which  
11 requires landlords to register their properties with  
12 the City. How can we address this homeless crisis  
13 without knowing available stock, empty buildings and  
14 lots. This bill will assist in housing many New  
15 Yorkers. Picture the Homeless is asking the City  
16 Council to support repealing the vacancy bonus and  
17 stop landlords from charging preferential rents.  
18 Since 1994 over 250,000 rent stabilized units have  
19 been lost through these practices. Repealing the  
20 bonus will help many New Yorkers stay out of  
21 shelters. Thank you.

22 SCOTT HUTCHENS: I would like to thank  
23 the Speaker for inviting us to testify at this  
24 hearing and for the Speaker's and Councils' support  
25 for renewing and strengthening the rent laws

2 protecting New York City tenants. My name is Scott  
3 Andrew Hutchens and I'm here to represent Picture the  
4 Homeless. In two months I will be a six year  
5 resident of the New York City shelter system which  
6 pays \$1,306.91 more to shelters than the rent of my  
7 previous apartment to house me alone. At Picture the  
8 Homeless, we find the results of the survey appalling  
9 but not surprising. It reiterates our demand for a  
10 registry of all vacant property in the City as called  
11 for by Intro 226. The crux of our argument for this  
12 necessity is found in the following statistic from  
13 the reports. Although the City increased its overall  
14 housing stock by 69,000 units this year,  
15 approximately 65,400 additional units are considered  
16 vacant but unavailable for sale or rent than in 2014.  
17 This means that net available housing stock for all  
18 practical purposes went up by only 3,600 units, far  
19 lower than the number of people who enter the shelter  
20 each year. While developers get tax breaks for  
21 creating new "scare"[?] affordable housing stock, the  
22 vast majority is well beyond the means of low and  
23 extremely low income people. The net vacancy rate  
24 for extremely low income housing is 1.15% while the  
25 net vacancy rate for extremely high income units is

2 8.74% and this is an upward trend. Whereas extremely  
3 low housing is on the decline and extremely low  
4 income housing is on the decline from the 2014  
5 survey, with the median household income at \$57,500,  
6 why are we giving tax breaks for housing for people  
7 who make over \$100,000 per year when so many of these  
8 units are vacant. Instead, we should be doing the  
9 reverse. In addition to the fees and fines imposed  
10 by a vacant property registry, we support the  
11 introduction of a peata [phonetic] tare tax for units  
12 that remain vacant for too much of the year. If the  
13 City is really committed to ending homelessness, it  
14 cannot be rewarding developers who add to the  
15 problem.

16 SUSAN STEINBURG: Housing Committee Chair  
17 Cornegy, I want to thank you and the members of the  
18 Housing Committee for supporting the renewal of City  
19 rent laws and the strengthening of State and City  
20 laws by closing loopholes. I'm Susan Steinburg. I'm  
21 president of the Stuyvesant Town, Peter Cooper  
22 Village Tenant's Association and we support  
23 Resolution 188-A and Intro 600-A. My community  
24 contains approximately 11,230 units and 28,000  
25 residents. In 1947 it was built as a community for

2 people of moderate means. In 1980, my one bedroom  
3 apartment cost \$250 a month. In 2018, that same one  
4 bedroom apartment starts at \$3,156. Figuring 30% of  
5 one's income for rent, one must earn \$126,240 to  
6 afford that one bedroom. That's not moderate. New  
7 York City's average annual salary is \$68,883 and our  
8 cost of living is 129% higher than the national  
9 average so how did a rent regulated community get  
10 from moderate to market? Through vacancy  
11 deregulation, the weakening of rent laws every time  
12 they come up for renewal in Albany, for vacancy  
13 bonuses, preferential rents and lots of major capital  
14 improvements that we pay for in perpetuity, loopholes  
15 that are bleeding our community, the City and the  
16 State of regulated renters. To afford the rent in  
17 Stuyvesant Town today, tenants double or triple up  
18 and then they leave at renewal as rents rise. Two  
19 thousand units turn over every year providing a  
20 really big opportunity for a 20% vacancy bonus. That  
21 plus multiple MCI's that we pay until death push  
22 rents to exceed the \$2,700 per month deregulation  
23 benchmark. To ease the turnover burden and sting of  
24 market rates, management offer preferential rents.  
25 Forty percent of our renters are preferential and the

2 difference between preferential and legal rents can  
3 be hundreds or thousands of dollars. Most renters  
4 don't understand that the landlord is allowed to  
5 raise the rent all the way up to the legal rent on  
6 renewal and the tenant's association gets the calls  
7 from tenants suffering from sticker shock when their  
8 monthly rent increases by say \$500. Renters are at a  
9 disadvantage. Owners don't worry every three years  
10 about whether they'll have a roof over their heads.  
11 Resolution 188-A and Intro 600-A must be passed and  
12 rent law strengthened to ensure that housing for  
13 hundreds of thousands of tenants is a right, not a  
14 luxury. Thank you.

15           Good afternoon, I don't want to beat a  
16 dead horse but I will. My name is Ed Viera. I'm a  
17 disabled special ed teacher and a person living with  
18 AIDS for the past 30 years. I also support  
19 Resolution 188-A as well as Introduction 600-A. I  
20 like everyone else I want to thank Speaker Corey  
21 Johnson and all the Council Members present. The  
22 fact is that the current City and State rent laws are  
23 weak. Embedded within are loopholes that promote  
24 homelessness and can make misery among the disabled,  
25 the elderly, fixed and low income people. Merely

2 renewing these laws every few years perpetuates this  
3 crisis because the landlords are the ones who benefit  
4 the most from them so we should 1) repeal the vacancy  
5 deregulation and reregulate units lost to the control  
6 example. One of the tenants in my building passed  
7 away two years ago. The landlords quickly moved to  
8 deregulate the apartment. The new tenant is now  
9 having to find somewhere else to live because she  
10 cannot afford the market rate. 2) Repeal the  
11 preferential rent loophole that allows landlords to  
12 slam the rent stabilized tenants with huge rent  
13 increases when leases are renewed. This is where I  
14 come in. When my lease was renewed in 2016, my rent  
15 was increased from \$1,100 to \$1,250. When the  
16 landlord, when I challenged the landlord he told me  
17 that's what HASA agreed to pay. That was a lie.  
18 That was a flat out lie so last year I went to  
19 housing court to fight the rent overcharge. It turns  
20 out that housing court doesn't really handle that.  
21 They refer you to VACR so I filed with them last  
22 year. Haven't heard anything from them. To speed up  
23 the process I began withholding my 30% share of the  
24 rent in the hopes that landlord files in housing  
25 court and then I can counter sue for the rent

2 overcharge, a fraudulent department registration  
3 designed to increase the market value and harassment.  
4 As soon as the landlord continues to hide behind the  
5 preferential rent loophole, my chances are dim but  
6 I'm looking forward to the fight. Last thing, repeal  
7 the statutory vacancy bonus. This means less housing  
8 for all of us and faster gentrification so this is  
9 not just about me. This is about all of you because  
10 I assume all of you are renting too so it affects us  
11 all. Thanks.

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. Just  
13 for the record, we don't advocate the beating or  
14 harming of any horses or any other animals.

15 [Laughter]

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I want to call the  
17 last panel. Mr. Earl Carter, Ava Farkas, Hosea  
18 Rodriguez, Jessica Burk, Julie Hamlin.

19 JESSICA BURK: Which side starts first?

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You may begin. Thank  
21 you. If you could turn your microphone on and  
22 identify yourselves. Thank you so much.

23 JESSICA BURK: Thank you. Certainly last  
24 but not least we hope. I appreciate the chance to be  
25 here. I'm Jessica Burk from Red Residents in



2 Distress, the Christopher Street Partnership and the  
3 95 Christopher Street Tenants' Committee. That being  
4 said, I support these two bills and resolutions. I  
5 was asked to come here and I wanted to state on the  
6 record as soon as I'm done here, I'm going across the  
7 street and I'm gonna file a federal lawsuit against  
8 my landlord, BLDG Management, that would be Lloyd  
9 Goldman from Goldman, Goldman, DeLorenzo. DeLorenzo  
10 was involved in racketeering and nothing much has  
11 changed in a number of years. Some of you might have  
12 read about my mom who at nearly 90 was dragged out of  
13 my apartment, my two bedroom rent controller  
14 penthouse apartment at gun point, placed in a nursing  
15 home under a whole variety of lies and they had  
16 thought they had taken the apartment away from us.  
17 I, of course, maintained the apartment and I'd like  
18 to thank Arthur Schwartz, our district leader, who  
19 some of you may have read went to jail for removing  
20 illegal surveillance cameras and we've been in the  
21 news quite a lot lately. The landlord was forced by  
22 the Judge to give us half a million dollars to vacate  
23 the apartment which I had a great deal of trouble  
24 accepting, accepting money from a crook but I felt  
25 that the time to maintain residency in this rent

2 controlled apartment was over because every day was a  
3 nightmare. I was constantly taken to the police  
4 precinct, falsely arrested and the criminal acts  
5 perpetrated on myself and my mother for the last 40  
6 years, I'm amazed I'm still alive. Mom is in a rehab  
7 center. She's 94, Ruth Burk. She's doing very well  
8 but for the record I'd like to know why my landlord  
9 is not in jail. Steve Croman is not the only dirty  
10 landlord in this City. My landlord needs to go to  
11 jail. There's no accountability. Adult Protective  
12 Services, HPD, the Sixth Precinct, everybody accepts  
13 bribes and money from my landlord BLDG Management and  
14 they drag out rent controlled tenants, rent  
15 stabilized tenants, numerous elderly tenants who  
16 don't have any family or friends have been removed  
17 from my apartment. Some are homeless, they've been  
18 placed in shelters and nothing's being done. There's  
19 no accountability and for the record, anybody  
20 interested in started a class action suit, well you  
21 can read about it in the paper. As I said, I'm going  
22 to pursue litigation but I want to thank Speaker  
23 Johnson for always being helpful as an advocate. My  
24 advocacy began with Tom Dwayne on the day he got  
25 elected so I'm very happy that you're all still

2 continuing the good work. Thank you for allowing me  
3 to testify.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Go ahead, yes.

5 JULIE HAMLIN: Thank you. My name is  
6 Julie Hamlin of the Dexter House 345 W. 86<sup>th</sup> Street.  
7 I'm a member of the Tenants' Association. I'm also a  
8 member of an NGO representing in the United Nations  
9 that work towards sustainable development goals for a  
10 law that was ratified recently in 2015 for 2030 part  
11 of which includes ending conditions of chronic  
12 poverty so one thing I want to start saying is that  
13 landlord bank on our ignorance, our poverty or worse,  
14 our vulnerabilities in how they abuse these  
15 regulatory laws. That is why I support the  
16 Resolution 188-A and Intro 600-A so I want to thank  
17 Speaker Corey Johnson and Honorable Chairman of this  
18 Council and the members of this Council for this  
19 privilege to speak to you about really something  
20 going on that is criminal through misuse of these  
21 loopholes in law. I also want to thank Honorable  
22 Council Member Helen Rosenthal who I guess she had to  
23 leave but her advocacy in restoring affordable  
24 housing is tireless and the people in her office, her  
25 staff are impeccable in guiding tenants like me to

2 resolution and to keep the fight alive. I'm only  
3 four years into a battle so the loopholes in  
4 regulation for what I live in, I live in an SRO  
5 landmark building, built in 1924, so here are tenants  
6 that have very limited privileges. Federal laws  
7 prevent even private mail that lead to all kinds of  
8 problems but let me focus on how the criminal  
9 harassment employed to force these people out of  
10 these meager little impoverished single rooms take  
11 place. So for four years they've been being poisoned  
12 slowly through chemical dispersions in the air, not  
13 limited to pesticide poisons mixed through somebody  
14 brought up earlier, relocater, aggressor, people that  
15 managers hire. Our manager, Roberto Gogichio  
16 [phonetic] we suspect is one of these people hiring  
17 people like that. He was found guilty by New York  
18 State DEC and Department of Environmental Protection  
19 and Department of Health for massive amounts of  
20 illegal ban pesticide poisons, illegal dispersions  
21 with illegally unlicensed people. I can't even get  
22 into the depth of fire potential risk. The heinous  
23 abuse it is to breathe air that you can't escape  
24 because it's there 24 hours a day in your home so  
25 what I've done is I've put together the article that

2 the *New York Post* their investigative article, I  
3 stapled it with my letter to this Council so the  
4 history of using these laws to deregulate rooms like  
5 ours that is led by greed and cruelty is actually  
6 targeting the aging demographic of senior, disabled,  
7 elderly mostly women and that really disturbs me that  
8 it's mostly women because they are too weak to fight.  
9 I know five tenants that were females that died of  
10 cancer who all complained our fumes so strong that  
11 they feared for their life. Try proving a fume in  
12 housing court. It took me four years but I did.  
13 Thank God for the HPD lawyers that stood up for me  
14 and the lawyers, the inspector involved. You know,  
15 we're limited by agency hours 9 to 5. We can't  
16 really get people in at night so what we're left with  
17 as impoverished tenants in this demographic is, you  
18 know, these kinds of loopholes being prevented and  
19 laws should reflect penalties for landlords abusing  
20 tenants like this and they should be forbidden to  
21 deregulate rooms. Whoever can write that law, please  
22 do. When they are found guilty of harassment, my  
23 landlord's been proven and admitted their guilt in  
24 dispersing these chemicals and you think it would  
25 stop there but it hasn't. We're still breathing

2 poisonous fumes, up to 24 hours a day in our rooms  
3 and what it looks like for the SOO tenants on the  
4 ground is that we live in fear of speaking out,  
5 serving our rights. I've got a death threat. I know  
6 three other women that have a death threat. No  
7 protection because law enforcement can't get involved  
8 regulating this to a housing issue. This is reduced  
9 to a housing issue, criminal harassment so there's  
10 predatory landlords like ours who use criminal  
11 harassment in these loopholes that have 0 regard for  
12 the rent stabilized tenants and they use every means  
13 to extract us out of our right to leave peacefully  
14 and with security so without these laws appealed we  
15 are at war just to keep in our home so, you know, I'm  
16 a witness to tenants that they let rent for 29 days.  
17 On the 30<sup>th</sup> day as an example of a loophole abuse by  
18 our building, they come for 29 days and then boom.  
19 They made an agreement to leave by the 30<sup>th</sup> day. The  
20 rent goes up again.

21 [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Can you please  
23 bring your testimony to a close for us?

24 JULIE HAMLIN: Pardon?

25

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Can you just bring  
3 your testimony to a close please.

4 JULIE HAMLIN: Yes, Chairman. Thank you,  
5 sorry. It's a complicated issue that these loopholes  
6 enable, predatory landlords using criminal harassment  
7 against elderly, aging people and I believe that  
8 repealing these laws and the vacancy loophole will  
9 protect further our right to prosecute because I have  
10 to prosecute now. I mean, it's become very serious.  
11 We're gonna die if we don't stop the fumes and his  
12 Honor Judge Went [phonetic] just restored my case for  
13 chemical abuse so. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you for your  
15 testimony.

16 Hi, good afternoon. Thank you Chair  
17 Cornegy, thank you to all the Council Members who are  
18 still in the room. We really appreciate having this  
19 issue be paid close attention to and given  
20 importance. My name is Ava Farkas. I'm the  
21 executive director of the Met Council on Housing.  
22 We're the City's oldest tenant union. We represent  
23 rent stabilized and rent controlled tenants across  
24 the City and we offer anti-eviction services through  
25 our hotline and our clinics and I worked briefly in

2 the City Council before my current position so I  
3 understand and know how much you hear about housing  
4 from your constituents and what a daily issue and a  
5 urgent issue it is and I just want to emphasize the  
6 importance of the bully pulpit you all have to help  
7 push the issues of closing the loopholes,  
8 strengthening the rent laws in Albany. We've worked  
9 together in the past in 2015 during the rent law  
10 expiration. Many Council Members went up to Albany  
11 and got arrested and did direct action with us with  
12 the tenant movement and we really appreciate that and  
13 we look forward to being in the struggle together. I  
14 wanted to just use the opportunity today to just talk  
15 not just about passing the resolutions but to also  
16 talk about taking action on a housing that you have  
17 direct control over which is the City's rezonings.  
18 Today on the cover of *AM New York* is an article about  
19 the Inwood rezoning. It's something that Met Council  
20 and Housing has been working on very closely and as  
21 we heard here today and we heard from many of the  
22 testimonies, the greatest need is in the lowest  
23 income bans. That's where there's the lowest vacancy  
24 whereas higher rent apartments have a higher vacancy  
25 rate and yet the City's solution to the affordability



2 crisis is the mandatory inclusionary housing program  
3 and the rezonings which are going to create buildings  
4 that are majority market rate and are not meeting the  
5 need that we just heard expressed over and over in  
6 this hearing today and what's more, there's really no  
7 analysis of the impact on rent regulated units in the  
8 surrounding area and it's really dangerous I think  
9 for the City to pursue housing development without  
10 taking into account the impact it will have on our  
11 current stock of affordable housing and rent  
12 regulation so they only study in the environmental  
13 review non-regulated units as being potentially  
14 housing that could be displaced but there's no study  
15 in the environmental reviews for rent regulated  
16 housing and in Inwood there are over 6,000 households  
17 with preferential rent and that means that those  
18 rents could skyrocket as soon as the rezoning goes  
19 through and as soon as speculation heats up in the  
20 neighborhood and that jump can be hundreds of dollars  
21 so we are really sitting like on a potential crisis  
22 and the fact that there's no information, the City  
23 doesn't have to study this or look into displacement  
24 is really troubling and so I really urge you not just  
25 to pass the bills today but to also hold the City to

2 a higher standard when it comes to the creation of  
3 new housing and really, really fight for that new  
4 housing to be deeply, deeply affordable. Thank you.

5 HOREA RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon. My  
6 name is Horea Rodriguez. I live in Korona, Queens,  
7 New York in City Council district 21 in New York  
8 State senate district 13. Right now I'm in  
9 discussion with a neighbor who is presently thinking  
10 of moving due to preferential rent. He is  
11 considering moving to another state. This tenant  
12 rented an apartment in 2015. After his first two  
13 year lease, his rent increased by \$129. After a  
14 year, his second lease had been increased by \$109.  
15 His monthly rent is continued to be increased due to  
16 the many MCI's. His initial rent of \$1,250 is now  
17 over \$1,500. He cannot afford another increase. He  
18 applied for disability rent increase exemption known  
19 as DRIE and was denied because his permanent legal  
20 regulated rent is \$2,337 so he can't get it. If this  
21 tenant moves out, the landlord can then apply the  
22 vacancy bonus of 20% and the next tenant will be  
23 paying more. Once the rent reaches \$2,700 as you all  
24 know, it will no longer be protected by the rent  
25 stabilized and Rent Guidelines Board rules.

2 Eventually, these apartments will no longer be  
3 affordable to many New Yorkers. Other tenants I have  
4 seen moving out from the complex have complained  
5 about preferential rent. It appears it is not  
6 explained when a lease is initially signed. Most did  
7 not know that their rent would increase drastically  
8 year to year. They only get one year lease. They  
9 were under the impression that the increase would be  
10 those determined by the RGB. They also had no idea  
11 that they would be responsible for MCI's. As an  
12 example in the past year my rent has increased by  
13 \$99.83 due to MCI's. Luckily I have SCRIE. The  
14 amount would be higher had I not convinced the  
15 Division of Housing and Community Renewal, the HCR  
16 that my apartment is really three rooms, not four.  
17 For all these years in my apartment, I've been paying  
18 MCI's based on four rooms, not three and I won't get  
19 that money back by the way. Okay, the income  
20 increase allowed by SCRIE and DRIE, great programs.  
21 Legal representation in housing for individuals being  
22 evicted is welcome but the only way we can keep rent  
23 affordable is we have to change the MCI, the  
24 preferential rent, the vacancy bonus and the vacancy  
25 decontrol laws. I am hoping you all can help us.

2 While MCI's are added to our rent, tenants continue  
3 to complain in the complex where I live, by the way,  
4 it's Leprox [phonetic] City, a lack of heat,  
5 services, etc. In a recent canvassing I did in a  
6 building to get people more involved with all these  
7 changes in the laws, most of them said they could not  
8 get involved. When I asked them why is they felt  
9 that the information I was compiling would then be  
10 turned over to the landlord and be used against them so  
11 though they spoke to me and they complained about  
12 everything going on in the complex, they did not want  
13 to get involved. Okay, so again, we need to do  
14 something about these laws and I'm hoping that City  
15 Council can help us so thanks for letting me speak.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you so much  
17 for your testimonies, all of you. Thank you. For  
18 the record, we have testimonies submitted by RSA, by  
19 Chip and by the Public Advocates office. Now we'll  
20 proceed to a vote. We ask Billy Martin to call the  
21 roll.

22 BILLY MARTIN: William Martin, committee  
23 clerk, roll call vote, Committee on Housing and  
24 Buildings, Introduction 600-A and Resolution 188-A.  
25 Chair Cornegy.

1 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I vote aye.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

4 BILLY MARTIN: Chin.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

6 BILLY MARTIN: Grodenchik.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

8 BILLY MARTIN: Gjonai.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAI: Aye.

10 BILLY MARTIN: Rivera.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

12 BILLY MARTIN: By a vote of 6 in the  
13 affirmative, 0 in the negative, and no abstentions,  
14 both items have been adopted by the Committee.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: We'll keep the roll  
16 open for 15 minutes.

17 BILLY MARTIN: Continuation rollcall  
18 Committee on Housing and Buildings, Council Member  
19 Rosenthal.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I vote aye.  
21 Thank you.

22 BILLY MARTIN: Continuation roll call  
23 Committee on Housing and Buildings, Council Member  
24 Williams.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye.

2 BILLY MARTIN: Council Member Williams.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye and  
4 again this gavel feels familiar.

5 BILLY MARTIN: Final vote Committee on  
6 Housing and Buildings, Introduction 600-A and  
7 Resolution 188-A have been adopted by a vote of 8 in  
8 the affirmative, 0 in the negative, and no  
9 abstentions.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Like old time  
11 sake, this hearing is now closed [gavel].

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 19, 2018