



**TESTIMONY**

Presented by

**Caryn Resnick**  
**Deputy Commissioner, External Affairs**

on

**Int. 702: Requiring the Development of a Guide for Building Owners Regarding  
Aging in Place**

before the

**New York City Council**  
**Committee on Aging**

on

**Wednesday, April 15, 2015**  
**10:00 A.M.**

at

**250 Broadway, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor Committee Room**  
**New York, NY 10007**

Good morning, Chairperson Chin and members of the Aging Committee. I am Caryn Resnick, Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs at the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA). I am joined today by Karen Taylor, Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of Community Services at DFTA, and colleagues from the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Int. No. 702, in relation to requiring the development of a guide for building owners regarding aging in place.

### **AGING IN PLACE**

Seniors represent the fastest growing segment of New York City's population. According to recent US Census data, New York City's older adult population includes 1.4 million people over the age of 60. Between 2000 and 2030, the population of those 60 and over is expected to increase by more than half. In addition, nearly 32 percent of all older New Yorkers report challenges with mobility and self-care.

A primary concern for seniors in New York City is housing. Most older New Yorkers prefer to continue living in their present homes and communities as they grow older. As the population of older New Yorkers continues to increase, homes and communities become more and more important in the aging process as well. There are a number of resources and literature by aging advocacy organizations, academic institutions, trade associations, design firms, and other groups that provide recommendations for successful aging in place. Given the diverse needs of the older adult population, aging in place resources propose a range of home modifications to address physiological changes that are associated with aging, such as changes in sensory perception, strength, flexibility, mobility, and cognition. A report issued by AARP, for instance, references that doors can be too narrow for a walker or a wheelchair, lighting can become insufficient for safe cooking, an oven can be out of reach for an individual with reduced flexibility, and exterior stairs can make entry and exit difficult. The Alzheimer's Association recommends installing a hidden gas valve or circuit breaker on stoves, using an automatic thermometer to monitor hot water temperature, and adding extra lighting in entryways, hallways, stairways, and bathrooms. These are some examples of the various resources in relation to safe aging in place.

## **AGE-FRIENDLY NYC**

To prepare the City for the aging boom, Age-friendly NYC was launched as a collaborative initiative by the Bloomberg Administration, the New York City Council, and the New York Academy of Medicine. Since the fall of 2007, Age-friendly NYC has been working to address this trend, and meet the challenges of growing older in New York City. The goals of Age-friendly NYC were to assess the City's responsiveness to the needs of older New Yorkers, develop recommendations, and implement strategies that allow New York to sustain and enhance its status as an age-friendly city.

In August 2009, the City announced 59 initiatives to make New York City more age-friendly. One of the Age-friendly NYC initiatives was to promote the use of Universal Design Guidelines through education and awareness efforts. The Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities (MOPD), along with DFTA and other agency partners, released an Inclusive Design Guidelines, New York City (IDG) publication in November 2010. The book is a New York City blueprint for universal design. The aim of the guidelines is to go beyond the requirements of the City's updated building code to create more user-friendly and safe buildings and landscapes that improve the quality of life for everyone – including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. The IDG, which can be used both as a stand-alone publication and in conjunction with the building code, contains recommendations for all use and occupancy classifications, especially residential and commercial buildings. Many topics are covered, including basic building components, routes, and building elements; plumbing elements and facilities; communications elements and features; selected spaces, furnishings, and equipment; and dwelling and sleeping units.

Building on the successes of Age-friendly NYC, this Administration looks forward to working with the New York City Council and the New York Academy of Medicine as we embark on the next phase of this initiative. Like in the past, the Commission will be comprised of leaders in a variety of fields, including business, education, law, architecture, health care, and aging. Currently, we are working together on re-launching the Age-friendly NYC Commission.

**INT. NO. 702: DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGING IN PLACE GUIDE FOR BUILDING OWNERS**

The Administration shares the concerns prompting the introduction of Int. No. 702, as successful and safe aging in place is of paramount importance. Similar to the IDG publication issued by MOPD, which was the result of an Age-friendly NYC initiative, the development of an aging in place guide as this bill requires can be part of the next phase of Age-friendly NYC. Developing an authoritative guide for residential building owners on aging in place specific to New York City will require technical expertise and resources outside of DFTA's capacity. The public/private partnership under Age-friendly NYC, which encompasses architectural and other expertise, is well suited for this endeavor.

**CONCLUSION**

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony on Int. No. 702. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.



## **Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, Inc.**

**City Council Aging Committee  
April 15, 2015**

**Res. 426-2014, Eliminating the SCRIE/DRIE Sunset Provision  
Int 0702-2015, Developing a guide for building owners regarding aging in place**

My name is Edith Prentiss; I am President of the 504 Democratic Club, Vice President for Legislative Affairs of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York (DIA), Chair of the Taxis For All Campaign (TFAC), and a Board Member of the Disability Network of New York City (DNNYC) Board. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

### **Res. 426-2014, Eliminating the SCRIE/DRIE Sunset Provision**

Rent Freeze (formerly known as the SCRIE & DRIE programs) is a very important benefit for eligible seniors and people with disabilities as it ensures their financial security in their apartment. When asked, I say "I'm going out in a box", the thought of being forced out of the apartment we've lived in for years is overwhelming for seniors and people with disabilities. We need the security that we will be able to live the rest of our lives where we have for years. People with disabilities have only been eligible for DRIE for less than ten years and many only this year when DRIE's income eligibility jumped from about \$20,000 to 50,000 to bring it into parity with SCRIE. Being ineligible for EPIC makes Rent Freeze eligibility all the more important for people with disability under the age of 65. Landlords should inform all tenants about Rent Freeze, not just seniors.

### **Int 0702-2015, Requiring the Developing a guide for building owners regarding aging in place**

Housing units modification to allow seniors to age in place are the same modifications needed to allow people with disabilities to remain in their housing unit. I would like to suggest the Department for the Aging work with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) to develop the guide. MOPD's experience with Project Open House (POH) which removes "small" readily achievable architectural barriers within an individual's home for qualified applicants with a permanent disability, thereby assisting in gaining greater independence is the same as for seniors. POH modification include: Widening doorways within non-structural partitions; Installing ramps no longer than 18 feet (18 inch high steps); Installing accessible plumbing fixtures; Removing sink base cabinets to provide an accessible work surface and/or a sink; Installation of grab bars, door openers, accessible door handles, accessible height shelving; Installing accessible railings; Installation / conversion of doorbell, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when an audible or visual system is needed. Unfortunately POH requires the building owner's permission which is often not forthcoming.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**AIANY Design for Aging Committee  
Testimony on an Aging in Place Guide before the New York City Council Committee on Aging  
April 15, 2015**

The Design for Aging Committee (DFA) of the AIA New York Chapter (AIANY) aims to increase public awareness of the needs of seniors in an urban environment and to create an age-friendly New York City by promoting design that accommodates those needs. The AIANY DFA Committee strongly supports the efforts of the City Council in establishing an Aging in Place Guide for building owners.

An Aging in Place Guide would help New York's burgeoning senior population to remain active and engaged in their communities, thus aging with dignity. Working toward improving existing residential buildings in ways that enable independent seniors to live safely and comfortably in their neighborhoods and apartments, or to age in place, is an important aspect of creating an age-friendly city. In this effort, the Council should also ensure that the proposed bill includes plans to promote and incentivize the implementation of these improvements.

For the past five years the DFA Committee has been exploring multiple issues of "aging in place" within a dense urban environment. In May 2013, we conducted a charrette (intensive one-day workshop) with an interdisciplinary group of professionals to generate ideas for modifying the existing housing stock of NYC to enable seniors to continue to live independently in their current apartments and communities. The results of that charrette were exhibited at the Center for Architecture in January 2014, and now can be viewed on the website [www.boomingboroughs.org](http://www.boomingboroughs.org). The ideas generated can be considered for incorporation into the guide for building owners on how to adapt their properties to better accommodate the needs of tenants who are seniors.

In May 2011, the DFA Committee produced a short document, "Urban Design & Architectural Guidelines for an Age-Friendly NYC," which contains numerous detailed suggestions for elements that should be included in an Aging in Place Guide. That document is available on our website, [www.aiany.org/committees](http://www.aiany.org/committees), under "Design for Aging." By creating a plan to work with property owners, relatively straightforward recommendations, such as those outlined in the 2011 document, can be applied to buildings throughout NYC and significantly improve the lives of seniors.

The Committee, along with the New York Academy of Medicine, BCID, and AARP, also participated in an Age-Friendly Design Audit of Brooklyn Borough Hall in February 2015. We assembled a Public Building Access Checklist that the Borough President's office swiftly completed and hopes to implement in other City buildings throughout NYC. This document can also help advise the Council's proposed guidelines for private buildings.

The DFA Committee would be very pleased to participate in developing the guide and to assist the Council and the City Administration in all efforts to improve buildings and neighborhoods for senior residents.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Morgenroth, Assoc. AIA  
Co-Chair, AIANY Design for Aging Committee

Christine Hunter, AIA  
Co-Chair, AIANY Design for Aging Committee



## **Urban Design and Architectural Guidelines for an Age-Friendly New York City**

Older adults want and should be able to live actively and independently for as long as possible. Age-friendly design takes into account the physical changes that occur over time, reducing physical and psychological barriers and the potential for injury. It enables older adults to maintain and maximize their physical capabilities and continue to live independently.

### **1. General**

- a)- Restorative recommendations for urban environments should advance numerous social objectives: liveliness, safety, sustainability, health, pleasure, dignity, equitable use, inclusiveness (e.g. age, gender, race, disabilities, height, pets, etc.).
- b)- Design for the scale of a range of individuals and how they experience an environment: eye level, pace of walking, views, clarity of information, flexibility of use, etc.
- c)- Emphasize qualitative aspects of design: comfortable eye-level stimulation with esthetic variety that is not overwhelming or confusing (contrast in color and shapes, elements with varying textures to respond to sight and touch, ample amount of ambient light, non-glare finishes), control of ambient noise.
- d)- Design for minimization of perceived or real physical barriers; all elements for public use should be located in easily accessible barrier-free areas.
- e)- Design building forms and public spaces to maintain a uniform level of comfort: reducing glare and drafts; controlling temperature, sound, and light; providing a feeling of safety.
- f)- Allow for reasonable amounts of physical activity in daily routines, but avoid elements that require high levels of strength and dexterity to operate.
- g)- Pay special attention to edges; whenever ground surface level changes exist, design the edges with contrasting colors and textures for easy perception by all users (street/sidewalk, stair treads and platforms, park/street, public/private, etc.).
- h)- All elements intended to be used by the public should be located in close proximity to access points (the public right-of-way, public transportation stops, accessible parking spaces, passenger drop-off areas).
- i)- Use multiple modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) to provide information and enable wayfinding through the environment; use a font size and type that is easily perceptible by seniors.
- j)- All age-friendly design should take into consideration the 7 principles of Universal (Inclusive) Design: Equitable use; Flexibility in use; Simple and intuitive use; Perceptible information; Tolerance for error; Low physical effort; Size and space for approach and use. For additional information about these principles see the website of the Center for Universal Design of North Carolina University <<http://www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/index.htm>>.

### **2. Public Spaces**

- a)- Design ways to invite people to use public space. Spaces should be designed to include items of interest for a variety of age groups (artwork, playgrounds, comfortable viewing areas, etc.), arranged so people with different interests can interact but not interfere with each other.
- b)- Provide the same means of access for all users, identical when possible, equivalent when not.
- c)- A percentage of the public space and elements should provide shelter from inclement weather - rain, sun, wind - so activities can occur under sheltered conditions that are easily accessible and safe.
- d)- Provide both shady and sunny areas, noisy and quiet areas, more-public and more-private areas, covered and open areas.

- e)- 'Shortest-distance' paths of travel with minimal changes in grade and smooth but not slippery surfaces should be clearly indicated.
- f)- If steps are necessary, provide dual handrails, at least on both sides and possibly in intermediate locations; provide ramps for wheelchairs, baby carriages, tricycles, etc.
- g)- Provide an adequate amount and variety of seating along the pathways, ideally on widened areas of the paths, in comfortably arranged conversational groups as well as in linear configurations; provide tables in some locations; provide movable chairs, at least some of which have arms.
- h)- Water fountains, restrooms, and recycling wastebaskets should be conveniently located along the pathways; food concessions are usually desirable.
- i)- Provide adequate lighting for paths of travel, seating areas, and play areas, to enable all desired activities and to increase comfort, safety, and security at all times.
- j)- Separate pedestrian traffic from bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades, etc., and provide appropriate informational signs and warning signs at intersections.

### **3. Streets**

- a)- Design for safety, access, and mobility. Incorporate mid-block curb extensions that can support benches, shading trees, and other elements that help reduce the length of continuous travel.
- b)- Sidewalks should be smooth, flat (level cross slope), with some protection from the elements, and no slippery surfaces. Provide a clear path free of obstructions; light poles, fire hydrants, seating, vegetation, newsstands, subway entrances, bicycle racks, parking meters, wastebaskets, etc. should be organized linearly near the curb. Use tinted concrete or different materials to create contrast between high-traffic zones and safe rest areas.
- c)- Design for context and livability, with some encouragement for physical activity. Provide frequent seating in hilly areas.
- d)- Provide separated pathways for walking, bicycling, and motor transport. Pay special attention to safety, accessibility, convenience, and comfort at junctions where the pathways cross.
- e)- Provide sidewalk extensions at intersections where possible. Curbs at crosswalks should include visible, textured ramps for wheeled vehicles and pedestrians.
- f)- Crosswalks should be clearly marked and well lit; medians and other safe areas in which pedestrians can rest should be provided, especially on high-traffic two-way streets. Wherever possible, incorporate raised crosswalks with contrasting paving materials; changes in level will help to reduce traffic speed and increase safety on residential streets.
- g)- Traffic signals for motorized vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians should be located to be clearly visible relative to the corresponding pathway; timing of traffic signals should be adequate to allow slower-moving pedestrians to cross.
- h)- Sewer drains with numerous small openings (rather than fewer large openings) should be located adjacent to curbs, but not in crosswalks.

### **4. Neighborhood Developments**

- a)- These should be designed, as much as possible, to contain all the components necessary for daily living, in reasonable proximity to each other: housing, stores, restaurants, offices, schools and day care centers, social service facilities, medical offices/hospitals/clinics, parks/playgrounds, community activities spaces, etc. The public facilities should be available not only to residents/tenants but also to others in the neighborhood.
- b)- New developments should 'reach out' to the surrounding community and be organized to take advantage of and be supplemental to existing elements in that community. Respect cultural diversity.
- c)- Exterior gathering spaces in new developments should be visible to the surrounding streets/community; visibility encourages interaction and enhances safety.
- d)- Provide some indoor community spaces designated solely for seniors, and others designated solely for children.
- e)- Public transportation should be conveniently located, easy to reach, and easy to access. Provide bus shelters, with raised loading platforms if necessary. If possible, request additional bus stops in proximate locations to the development.



## **5. Buildings**

### **Residential and non-Residential Buildings**

- a)- Design building floor plans that are clearly understood and easily negotiable. Access to spaces must be clear and intuitive. Avoid complicated circulation patterns and provide wayfinding markers (forms, color, texture, light, sound, landmarks, etc.).
- b)- To accommodate a wide range of abilities, literacy and language skills, use a multiplicity of modes to provide essential information (pictorial, verbal, tactile). Maximize legibility of essential information; introduce color to establish identifiable landmarks within buildings.
- c)- Provide covered car drop-off areas (with curb cuts if possible) and covered entries for pedestrians.
- d)- Provide power-assisted entry doors, whether swing or sliding.
- e)- Design deep vestibules to give people with walkers or wheelchairs better maneuverability and more time to move away from one set of doors that is opening or closing.
- f)- Provide seating in lobbies to allow seniors to rest and wait comfortably.
- g)- Provide seating near elevators to allow seniors to rest while waiting for elevators on all floor levels.
- h)- Design all public toilets to be handicapped accessible; when providing grab bars, provide a rear-wall flip-down bar, as most seniors need 2 side supports if they need to use grab bars.
- i)- In public toilets provide automatic sensor no-touch water faucets, soap dispensers, and flushometers whenever possible.
- j)- Develop alliances with nearby dry cleaners, markets that deliver groceries, and house-cleaning companies that could provide maid service for apartments.
- k)- Design consistent light levels that allow seniors to see well with obviously-located, adequately-lit directories and wayfinding signs. Prevent glare by providing indirect light and by controlling sunlight.
- l)- Design buildings to provide access to views and controlled natural light wherever possible; this is good for orientation and general well-being.
- m)- Provide handrails or lean-rails along interior corridors.
- n)- Provide warnings when approaching hazardous areas or sectors that are not intended for everyone.

## **6. Residential Units**

### **A. General:**

- a)- Design all residential spaces to accommodate people with diverse abilities. Design spaces that can be flexibly adapted as the needs of users change.
- b)- Design layouts that are barrier-free and allow for adequate maneuverability of wheelchairs.
- c)- Give especially careful attention to fall-prevention and to the selection of materials (colors, textures, maintenance requirements, offgassing). Avoid rounded transition strips.
- d)- Design hallways at least 4 feet wide.
- e)- Provide washers and dryers within units in multiple dwellings, preferably side by side, front-loading on storage pedestals, stacked accessible second choice. In private houses, locate appliances on the living-area level, not on an upper floor or in the basement.
- f)- Design walk-in closets with 2 parallel sides of hanging space to be more than 6' in width; if closets must be less than 6' wide, design them with L-shaped hanging space.
- g)- Provide multiple shelves in all closets, mounted at different heights to allow use by people of all abilities. If possible, design for the shelves to be adjustable.
- h)- Provide lighting inside all usable spaces, especially storage areas, closets, cabinets, and drawers. Incorporate automatic motion sensors when possible. If automated sensors are not possible for closets and storage areas, install switches on the exterior side of each space.
- i)- Mount electrical wall-outlets at heights conveniently accessible to seated and standing users. Provide more than the minimum required number of electrical outlets in every space, to allow greater flexibility of use.

### **B. Kitchens:**

- a)- Provide universally-designed equipment, fixtures, and cabinets.
- b)- Microwaves and other ovens must be placed at a height that eliminates the need for lifting hot objects overhead. Use counter-level or under-counter microwaves.

- c)- Wall ovens must be located adjacent to a counter.
- d)- Raise dishwashers (install like wall ovens) so seniors don't have to bend to load.
- e)- Do not design cabinets above 7', since it is too high to reach, so stools (which could result in loss of balance) are not required.
- f)- Favor drawers, pull-out shelves, pull-out cabinets, and other pull-out elements over basic below-counter storage cabinets. Drawers and pull-out elements allow for greater reach and less maneuvering space within a kitchen.
- g)- Incorporate dynamic systems that provide greater convenience in the use of the kitchen, e.g. a countertop that can be raised or lowered to accommodate the needs of tall, short, seated, and standing users.
- h)- Introduce light in all storage cabinets and drawers. Take advantage of the different systems available, such as contact, magnetic, motion-activated.

**C. Bathrooms:**

- a)- Favor showers over bathtubs. Design showers large enough to include a bench, or room to bring in a stool.
- b)- Avoid designing deep soaking tubs that are difficult for seniors to get out of, requiring a lot of upper body strength.
- c)- In showers and tubs, provide temperature controls and anti-scalding devices; put shower head on a vertical adjustable rod for ease of use if resident must sit down in the shower.
- d)- Reinforce all bathroom walls to allow for (future) installation of grab bars in a flexible manner. Though horizontal grab bars are the most common placement, they are not always the best solution for a variety of disabilities in the use of tubs, showers and toilets.

AIA New York Chapter  
Design for Aging Committee

May 18, 2011

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## City Council Committee on Aging

April 15, 2015

Remarks by Molly Krakowski, Director of Legislative Affairs

Jewish Association for Services for the Aging (JASA)

Good morning. I'd like to thank Councilmember Chin for chairing today's hearing. My name is Molly Krakowski and I am Director of Legislative Affairs at JASA.

JASA is a not-for-profit agency serving the needs of older adults in the greater New York area. Its mission is to sustain and enrich the lives of the aging in the New York metropolitan area so that they can remain in the community with dignity and autonomy. JASA has developed a comprehensive, integrated network of services that provides a continuum of community care. Programming promotes independence, safety, wellness, community participation, and an enhanced quality of life for New York City's older adults. These programs reach over 40,000 clients and include home care, case management services, senior centers, NORC supportive services, home delivered meals, caregiver support, continuing education, licensed mental health, housing, advocacy, legal services, adult protective services, and guardianship services.

According to the New York Academy of Medicine, "over the next 20 years, the number of New Yorkers age 65+ is expected to increase by nearly 50%. The growth of our City's older adult population mirrors national and worldwide trends. JASA suggests that now is the time to invest further in services for older adults, to stay ahead of the aging trend and to prepare for the type of services and programs necessary to maintain a healthy aging population in the community at large. **Intro 702**, introduced by Speaker Mark Viverito, Council Member Chin, Vallone, and other members of the City Council, is a step in the right direction.

In February, the Aging Committee held a hearing focused on NORCs, in which numerous groups and individuals testified to their interest in further developing the NORC model. What makes the NORC model so popular is the underlying desire for people to age in place, in their own homes. Intro 702 provides residents with the opportunity to do just that. It recognizes that people are living longer, in the community, in buildings that have no particular designation as a "senior building" or NORC funding. Intro 702 is a benefit to residents and building management alike. Tenants will be supported in their needs for adequate lighting, grab bars and other tangible building improvements; housing managers will benefit from a clear set of guidelines and necessary tools to provide maximum safety for tenants.

Despite the recent discussion of affordable housing in New York, there has been considerably less talk of the specific lack of housing options for older adults. JASA receives calls daily inquiring about housing options for seniors. Clearly, the time has come for agencies in aging

and supportive housing to work together to explore opportunities to meet the needs of the housing crisis, which will only grow as the boomer community grows older and frailer.

JASA operates eight senior houses in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. The average wait list for JASA housing is over 15 years. At this time there are no new federal Section 202 housing developments in the works. Most new housing developments in New York are unaffordable for seniors on fixed incomes; there are no new Section 8 vouchers being offered, and non-profit housing development is priced out of most available property by larger luxury developments.

JASA firmly believes that older adults should be able to age in place, in their homes and communities. As NYC's real estate market continues grows, and neighborhoods are re-zoned, seniors need the safety provisions included in Intro 702, as well as Intro 214 (2014) to protect against harassment and displacement from their neighborhoods.

Thank you for making senior housing a top priority of this Committee and for your efforts to assist older adults to remain in their homes.



Good morning to the Committee on the Aging and all of your distinguished guests.

My name is Melissa Muñoz Patterson and I am representing Regional Aid for Interim Needs (R.A.I.N.). Founded in the Bronx by Beatrice Castiglia Catullo--R.A.I.N. has been a pillar in the community providing essential quality services for the past 51 years. We employ many NYC residents who are well versed in the needs of our City. As you may be aware, we provide the following services:

- Case Management,
- Elder Abuse,
- R.A.I.N. One Stop (provides benefits and entitlements),
- 11 Senior Centers,
- Home Health Care,
- Meals on Wheels,
- R.A.I.N. Mobile Food Kitchen,
- Intergenerational Program,
- RAIN Caregiver Support Center, and last but not least,
- Two Senior Buildings with livable community model.

Our varied and extensive experience with seniors places us in the unique position to be able to offer insight as to many threats and opportunities that exist with the initiative to keep seniors in place in their homes and communities.

R.A.I.N. fully supports the Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, the elimination of the sunset provisions related to income threshold increases for the senior citizen rent increase exemption and disability rent increase exemption programs. R.A.I.N.'s One Stop program provides assistance to seniors in receiving this exact benefit! Over 400 seniors have been assisted with receiving SCRIE and DRIE this year alone.

Additionally, R.A.I.N. would like to take this opportunity to address the requirement of the development of a guide for building owners regarding

keeping seniors at home and allowing them to age in place. R.A.I.N. has its roots in allowing seniors to age in place with grace and dignity. THIS IS R.A.I.N.! In the best of all worlds, we could legislate the necessary requirements to allow all of our seniors to age in place. However—mere suggestions or regulations without penalties or enticements will not convince landlords to make changes. R.A.I.N.'s suggestion would be to offer a **tax credit** for projects that follow the guidelines put in place.

However, there is a point of **caution** that must be made as to this guide—improvements made in apartments will **allow landlords to increase rental rates**—potentially putting the seniors into a more dangerous situation unintentionally. That is, in an apartment that either they can no longer afford or a rental rate that puts the apartment above the rent control threshold. That would directly controvert the intention of this guide and the goal of allowing seniors to age in place.

This is a great initiative with a worthy intention. However, this guide must come with a mechanism to encourage and support landlords as they make the necessary updates and investments in order to keep the seniors in their homes and communities AND take into account the potential pitfalls that could controvert the goals of the potential legislation.

R.A.I.N. thanks you for the opportunity to address these important issues that are a priority to your committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Muñoz Patterson, Esq., MBA  
General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer



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# **New York City**

**AARP New York**

**Testimony of  
Beth Finkel, AARP NY State Director,  
NYC Council Committee on Aging**

**Introduction 702  
Resolution 426**

**April 15, 2015**

**City Hall  
New York, New York**

Contact: Chris Widelo (212) 407-3737 | [cwidelo@aarp.org](mailto:cwidelo@aarp.org)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Good Morning, Chairwoman Chin and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Beth Finkel and I am the State Director of AARP New York. On behalf of our 750,000 members age 50 and older in New York City, I want to thank you for the opportunity to express our support for two important items on the agenda today.

### **Introduction 702**

“Aging in place” is the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level. According to AARP research, older New Yorkers are no different from older Americans nationally in their near universal preference to stay in their own homes as they age. A 2014 AARP survey of voters 50 and older in the city found 90 percent say it is very to extremely important, as they age, to be able to stay in their homes, where they have strong social networks and a sense of familiarity.

One-fourth of all NYC residents age 50+ are living with a disability, and rates of disability more than double after city residents turn 65, jumping from 16% for those between ages 50-64 to 40% for those 65 and older. Among NYC Seniors (65+), nearly one-third have a physical disability and 22% have difficulty going out of their homes. As the Senior (65+) population grows, it will be important to more people that the City is prepared to address the needs of its residents who are disabled or mobility challenged.

AARP believes that it is important to provide safe, decent, and accessible housing that promotes independence and aging in place through home modification and repair, appropriate design features in new and rehabilitated housing (through principles such as universal design, visitability, inclusive home design, and energy efficiency), and the use of innovative home products.



For these reasons AARP supports Introduction 702 as a first step in educating building owners on the types of modifications and improvements that can be made to allow tenants to remain in place as long as possible.

### **Resolution 429**

In a 2014 report by AARP that surveyed NYC voters 50 years and older, the issue of affordable housing surpassed all other community concerns. Half of all 50+ NYC registered voters cited the lack of affordable housing as a “major” concern.

Additionally, affordable housing ranks first in major problem ratings among total registered voters; among the most engaged voters it stands out more clearly as the top regarded “major problem” of the city’s issues in the survey.

Older Americans – many of whom are on fixed and limited incomes - are particularly vulnerable to rising rental costs. A Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies report on housing conditions for older adults finds that approximately 52 percent of adults age 65-79 are paying more than they can afford for rental housing, i.e., more than 30 percent of their income. In addition, approximately 28 percent of renters in the same age group are spending more than 50 percent of their income on housing costs. These older renters meet the definition of “severely cost-burdened.” Moreover, the current production of affordable housing is unable to keep pace with growing demand.

Programs like SCRIE are important in making sure that older NYC residents who meet the qualifications are not priced out of housing due to rent increases. AARP applauded NYC and the state for increasing the income eligibility for SCRIE in 2014 to \$50,000. That provision is set to sunset on July 1, 2016. We must act now by passing Resolution 429 to ensure that NYC’s most vulnerable residents have the stability that affordable housing provides and are not impacted by the expiration of the income eligibility threshold.

### **Conclusion**

Chairwoman Chin and members of the Aging Committee, thank you for the opportunity to highlight a few of the many needs for NYC residents as they age. Given the importance affordable and appropriate housing plays in the lives of older NYC residents, I urge your committee and City Council colleagues, on behalf of AARP New York, to favorably pass Introduction 702 and Resolution 429.

**New York City Council  
Committee on Aging  
Councilwoman Margaret Chin, Chair  
Public Hearing on Intro. 0702-2015 and Res. 0426-2014  
April 15, 2015**

LiveOn NY is dedicated to making New York a better place to age. Founded in 1979, with a membership base of more than 100 organizations ranging from individual community-based centers to large multi-service organizations, LiveOn NY is recognized as a leader in aging. LiveOn NY's membership serves over 300,000 older New Yorkers annually and is comprised of organizations providing an array of community based services including, multi-service senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, elder abuse, affordable senior housing with services, case management, NORCs and other services intended to support older New Yorkers in the community. LiveOn NY connects resources, advocates for positive change, and builds, supports and fosters innovation. Our goal is to help all New Yorkers age with confidence, grace and vitality.

LiveOn NY's Affordable Senior Housing Coalition is comprised of 25 of the city's leading nonprofit housing with services providers, taking a leading role having developed and operating upwards of 20,000 units of low income housing citywide.

The ability of older adults, frequently the anchors to stable communities and families, to remain in their homes is at substantial risk in neighborhoods of all socioeconomic levels across the city. LiveOn NY believes that every New Yorker should grow old the same way that they've always lived: like New Yorkers.

The population of older adults living with financial insecurity is growing. Because income for older adults remains fixed, or worse, declines, many adults live on a fiscal cliff in a city that already has an extreme need for affordable housing options. According to the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, 1 in 3 New Yorkers over the age of 65 live in poverty and 2 in every 3 people over 70 pay more than 30% of their income in rent. Nearly 100,000 seniors experience extreme rent burden, meaning they pay over 50% of their income in rent.

Given this alarming reality, LiveOn NY thanks Chairwoman Margaret Chin and committee members for the opportunity to discuss two important initiatives that support the ability for older New Yorkers to age in place in their homes.

**Res. 0426-2014**

On behalf of thousands of vulnerable older New Yorkers benefitting from the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program as well as the near 70,000 more who could be enrolled but are not, according to the New York City Department of Finance Report (DOF) *Freeze Your Rent* report, LiveOn NY commends Council Members Cohen and Rosenthal, Chairwoman Chin and

cosponsors for recognizing the invaluable benefit of the SCRIE Program to allow older New Yorkers to remain in their homes.

LiveOn NY was proud to work with both the state legislature and City Council to get the SCRIE income eligibility level increased to \$50,000 and we applaud City Council's quick action to enact this change, which has a direct positive impact for the thousands of older New Yorkers who are on the fiscal cliff. It is hard to imagine how the state could allow the \$50,000 income eligibility to disappear, leaving thousands of older New Yorkers without adequate protection to face eviction and homelessness. LiveOn NY strongly urges the city and state to ensure the income eligibility increase does not sunset.

In addition to supporting Res. 0426-2014, LiveOn NY has two additional recommendations regarding the SCRIE program.

### **LiveOn NY Urges the City to Support an Aggressive SCRIE Public Awareness, Outreach and Enrollment Campaign**

There is a tremendous leadership opportunity for City Council to reach upwards of 70,000 eligible but unenrolled older adult households to help build a wall of protection around seniors to remain in their homes. LiveOn NY created a SCRIE Underutilization Map and Sheet, attached to this testimony, which illustrates this outreach need. As noted in the *Freeze Your Rent* Report, DOF's goal is to better focus outreach efforts to reach every qualifying tenant to increase the low utilization rate, and fostering community partnerships is a key component of that goal. This will take funding and a strategic plan, and a good comparison is the success of the city's current well-orchestrated Pre-K public awareness campaign.

Given our extensive network and membership, LiveOn NY is uniquely positioned to work with the city with the shared goal of reaching each qualified SCRIE tenant. LiveOn NY is grateful for funding last fiscal year to support an outreach and enrollment initiative to reach more seniors and would appreciate the opportunity to work more intensely with City Council, DOF, DFTA, Department of Immigrant Affairs and other partners to develop a robust public awareness campaign and expand our already established and proven Benefits and Outreach Program, which screens and assists over 4,000 seniors annually for SNAP and SCRIE. We look forward to working with City Council and the Administration in these efforts.

### **LiveOn NY Urges the City to Conduct a Cost-Benefit Analysis of a SCRIE Rollback to the Affordability Rate**

The lack of a public awareness campaign also has other serious consequences, even for those older adults who do find out about SCRIE and enroll. Many seniors, as seen by data by the DOF Report, access SCRIE when they are in crisis and already paying 40-50% of their income in rent. While having their rent frozen at that level helps, they are still living on the fiscal cliff.

Rolling the rent back to the affordability level, which is where their rent would have been frozen if they knew about SCRIE earlier, would alleviate them of being at-risk of eviction, homelessness and would allow them additional money for food, medications and other needs. It would also allow them to remain in rent regulated apartments thereby protecting this valuable affordable housing stock.

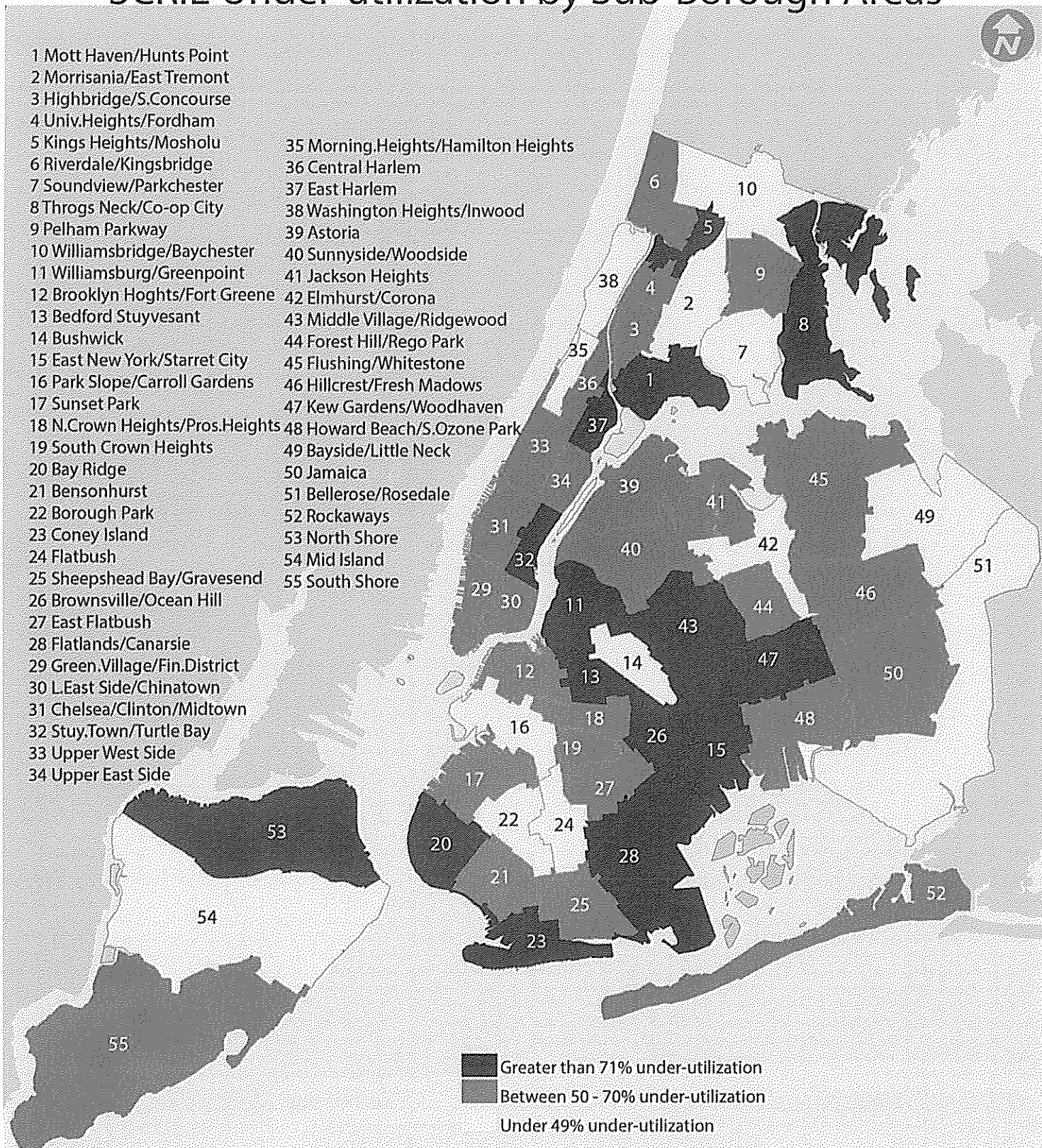
Thus, LiveOn NY recommends that a cost benefit analysis be done by DOF or the Independent Budget Office (IBO) reducing low income tenants' rent to the affordability rate for those enrolled on SCRIE, which is one-third of the household's total monthly income.

### **Intro. 0702-2015**

LiveOn NY commends Speaker Mark-Viverito and Chairwoman Chin for their introduction of Intro. 0702-2015 to require the City to develop a guide for building owners regarding aging in place. Policies and funding for housing with services that support older adults aging in place is a primary goal of LiveOn NY's Affordable Senior Housing Coalition. Through their experience and practical knowledge of their tenants and buildings, the Coalition is uniquely positioned to offer input in this area, and would be eager to work with City Council and city agencies as a resource.

LiveOn NY thanks Chairperson Chin and the Committee for this opportunity to testify on these two initiatives that would help seniors to age in place.

## SCRIE Under-utilization by Sub-Borough Areas



Sources:  
 NYC Department of Finance  
 NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (map)

LiveOn NYUnder-utilization of SCRIE by Neighborhood

| Sub-Borough Neighborhood               | Borough       | # Eligible | Total Enrolled   |                  | Total Eligible but Unenrolled   |                                 | Potential Monthly SCRIE Benefit (@\$112/month) | Potential Annual SCRIE Benefit (@\$112/month) |
|--|---------------|------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
|  |               |            | Total # Enrolled | Total % Enrolled | Total # Eligible but Unenrolled | Total % Eligible but Unenrolled |  |   |
|  |               |            |                  |                  |                                 |                                 |  |   |
| Brownsville / Ocean Hill               | Brooklyn      | 2,217      | 266              | 12%              | 1,951                           | 88%                             | \$ 218,508                                     | \$ 2,622,090                                  |
| Bedford Stuyvesant                     | Brooklyn      | 1,813      | 254              | 14%              | 1,559                           | 86%                             | \$ 174,628                                     | \$ 2,095,538                                  |
| Kew Gardens / Woodhaven                | Queens        | 2,741      | 411              | 15%              | 2,330                           | 85%                             | \$ 260,943                                     | \$ 3,131,318                                  |
| East New York / Starrett City          | Brooklyn      | 1,144      | 194              | 17%              | 950                             | 83%                             | \$ 106,346                                     | \$ 1,276,155                                  |
| East Harlem                            | Manhattan     | 3,498      | 595              | 17%              | 2,903                           | 83%                             | \$ 325,174                                     | \$ 3,902,089                                  |
| Kingsbridge Heights / Mosholu          | Bronx         | 5,886      | 1,413            | 24%              | 4,473                           | 76%                             | \$ 501,016                                     | \$ 6,012,196                                  |
| Bay Ridge                              | Brooklyn      | 3,293      | 790              | 24%              | 2,503                           | 76%                             | \$ 280,300                                     | \$ 3,363,602                                  |
| Middle Village / Ridgewood             | Queens        | 2,111      | 507              | 24%              | 1,604                           | 76%                             | \$ 179,688                                     | \$ 2,156,260                                  |
| Mott Haven / Hunts Point               | Bronx         | 2,197      | 549              | 25%              | 1,648                           | 75%                             | \$ 184,548                                     | \$ 2,214,576                                  |
| Coney Island                           | Brooklyn      | 6,445      | 1,676            | 26%              | 4,769                           | 74%                             | \$ 534,162                                     | \$ 6,409,939                                  |
| Stuyvesant Town / Turtle Bay           | Manhattan     | 5,504      | 1,431            | 26%              | 4,073                           | 74%                             | \$ 456,172                                     | \$ 5,474,058                                  |
| Flatlands / Canarsie                   | Brooklyn      | 657        | 177              | 27%              | 480                             | 73%                             | \$ 53,716                                      | \$ 644,596                                    |
| Throgs Neck / Co-op City               | Bronx         | 4,875      | 1,365            | 28%              | 3,510                           | 72%                             | \$ 393,120                                     | \$ 4,717,440                                  |
| Williamsburg / Greenpoint              | Brooklyn      | 3,515      | 984              | 28%              | 2,531                           | 72%                             | \$ 283,450                                     | \$ 3,401,395                                  |
| North Shore                            | Staten Island | 809        | 227              | 28%              | 582                             | 72%                             | \$ 65,238                                      | \$ 782,853                                    |
| Riverdale / Kingsbridge                | Bronx         | 3,759      | 1,165            | 31%              | 2,594                           | 69%                             | \$ 290,496                                     | \$ 3,485,946                                  |
| Rockaways                              | Queens        | 1,669      | 517              | 31%              | 1,152                           | 69%                             | \$ 128,980                                     | \$ 1,547,764                                  |
| Sunnyside / Woodside                   | Queens        | 4,295      | 1,374            | 32%              | 2,921                           | 68%                             | \$ 327,107                                     | \$ 3,925,286                                  |
| Highbridge / S. Concourse              | Bronx         | 5,578      | 1,841            | 33%              | 3,737                           | 67%                             | \$ 418,573                                     | \$ 5,022,877                                  |
| Jamaica                                | Queens        | 2,848      | 968              | 34%              | 1,880                           | 66%                             | \$ 210,524                                     | \$ 2,526,290                                  |
| East Flatbush                          | Brooklyn      | 2,437      | 853              | 35%              | 1,584                           | 65%                             | \$ 177,414                                     | \$ 2,128,963                                  |
| Central Harlem                         | Manhattan     | 3,072      | 1,137            | 37%              | 1,935                           | 63%                             | \$ 216,760                                     | \$ 2,601,124                                  |
| Hillcrest / Fresh Meadows              | Queens        | 2,697      | 998              | 37%              | 1,699                           | 63%                             | \$ 190,300                                     | \$ 2,283,604                                  |
| South Shore                            | Staten Island | 384        | 142              | 37%              | 242                             | 63%                             | \$ 27,095                                      | \$ 325,140                                    |
| Astoria                                | Queens        | 3,643      | 1,384            | 38%              | 2,259                           | 62%                             | \$ 252,970                                     | \$ 3,035,639                                  |
| Upper East Side                        | Manhattan     | 3,962      | 1,545            | 39%              | 2,417                           | 61%                             | \$ 270,684                                     | \$ 3,248,206                                  |
| Flushing / Whitestone                  | Queens        | 3,950      | 1,541            | 39%              | 2,410                           | 61%                             | \$ 269,864                                     | \$ 3,238,368                                  |
| Brooklyn Heights / Fort Greene         | Brooklyn      | 1,360      | 544              | 40%              | 816                             | 60%                             | \$ 91,392                                      | \$ 1,096,704                                  |
| North Crown Heights / Prospect Heights | Brooklyn      | 2,205      | 882              | 40%              | 1,323                           | 60%                             | \$ 148,176                                     | \$ 1,778,112                                  |

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Muñoz Patterson

Address: 811 Morris Park Ave Bx, NY 10462

I represent: RAIN

Address: "

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Cianfrani

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Live On-NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Molly Krakowski

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: JASA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. 902  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Hunter, AIA, LEED AP

Address: 39-33 19th St., Sunnyside, NY 11104

I represent: Design for Aging Committee, AIA NY Chapter

Address: 536 La Guardia Place, New York, NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 702 Res. No. 426  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Brownworth

Address: 127 Columbia St., Brooklyn, NY 11231

I represent: AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS NYC CHAPTER

Address: 536 LA GUARDIA PLACE, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maggie Castro-Stevens

Address: 780 Third Ave, 33 FL NY

I represent: AARP

Address: SAME AS ABOVE

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 702 Res. No. 426

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/15/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Edith Paonessa  
Address: 739 W 186 St NYC 10033

I represent: DIA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 702 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROBERT DICCOLO  
Address: 100 GOLD ST. NYC, NY 10038

I represent: MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Address: SAAD

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4-15-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Caryn Resnick  
Address: Deputy Commissioner, External Affairs

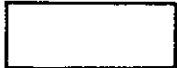
I represent: DETA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4-15-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karen Taylor

Address: Assistant Commissioner, Community

I represent: Services

Address: DFTA

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jordan Press

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ray Hodys

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_