



**New York City Department of Emergency Management
Committee on Fire and Emergency Management
Submission for the Record
April 3, 2025**

Thank you for providing New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM) with the opportunity to submit testimony for the record on Introduction 749, a bill to create an office of residential displacement remediation and establish a residential displacement remediation online portal.

On March 14, 2025, Commissioner Iscol provided testimony at the preliminary budget hearing, detailing the increasing reality that New York City Emergency Management is facing related to the growing and concerning unreliability of federal funding for emergency management. This puts a significant strain on our existing resources, our dedicated staff – of which more than 60% are federally funded and therefore potentially at risk, which would decimate New York City’s ability to respond to emergencies – and our ability to effectively prepare for and respond to the growing array of threats facing our city. At all levels, NYCEM is being asked to do more with less, which is not a sustainable model. We thank Speaker Adams for recognizing this and speaking out on it publicly over the last few weeks; we greatly appreciate her support, and Council’s support, as NYCEM navigates this concern while striving to maintain our core mandated goals and charter mission responsibilities.

The above statement underlines our concern regarding Introduction 749, as currently placed in NYCEM’s code. This legislation as currently written, detailing housing oversight and responsibilities straight to NYCEM, is a vast change to the agency’s core mission and mandate which would dramatically shift our agenda; we would have to relocate or suspend current programs and goals and overhaul our structure in an attempt to be in compliance. Firstly, NYCEM does not have oversight to flex over other city agencies. Secondly, while we are a coordinating agency, this legislation is far beyond coordination as it directs oversight of housing, housing placement, and client services. NYCEM is not the administrative agency that manages displacement from fires or floods, nor from natural disasters. NYCEM does not provide housing directly– we do not run vacates, we do not have hotel contracts, and we do not provide case management nor do any direct client services. We occasionally do have a role in very large vacates where significant numbers of people are suddenly displaced, usually do to fires and floods. In that situation our field operations team will identify immediate places, generally public-school facilities or MTA buses, where tenants can safely stay until the Red Cross arrives to provide them with a hotel placement. They will also lead interagency meetings with relevant agencies and landlords, identify immediately needed resources such as large-scale equipment or food and water, and provide information so NYCEM can amplify immediate life safety messaging via Notify NYC. After that point, the operation will transition to the Red Cross for short-term hotel stays, and then to HPD for longer term housing and case management.

We defer to our colleagues at partner agencies such as HPD and DOB to discuss their roles in vacate protocols and to HPD to discuss emergency housing services and case management and their already existing capabilities, many of which are duplicated within Introduction 749.

While NYCEM remains absolutely committed to its fundamental mission of protecting the people and communities of New York City, we urge Council to reconsider this legislation within our code, without which we are being moved into an entirely new sphere of oversight, housing responsibilities, and direct case management services.



es. We recommend Council instead look to utilize already existing services and programs from our larger partner agencies who have the infrastructure, expertise, and funding and can work with Council to identify what you may see as gaps in service and adjust with them accordingly.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today.

Testimony from FDNY, DOB, and HPD

Committee on Fire and Emergency Management Jointly with Committee on Housing and Buildings

Council Chambers – City Hall

April 3, 2025

Good morning, Chairs Ariola and Sanchez and Committee Members. My name is John Esposito and I am the Chief of Department with the New York City Fire Department.

Introduction 751 would require the Fire Department to develop a residential guide to be distributed to residents affected by fire. The guide must include a summary of relevant agencies and their roles; best practices concerning renters' insurance and suspending utilities for residential tenants displaced by fire; information on any city/state/federal organizations that provide emergency housing assistance, disaggregated by borough; information on any city/state/federal organizations or agencies that provide emergency aid to individuals; landlord duties and tenant protections following a fire; and information pertaining to inspections. Under this bill, responding firefighters are required to distribute the guide. The guide would also be distributed to tenants on location of all post-fire inspections.

The Fire Department has serious concerns about this bill. Operationally, it would add significant burdens to firefighters during a critical period when they must focus on two urgent responsibilities. Depending on the nature of the fire, firefighters must either (1) immediately undertake decontamination processes to clean themselves and their gear or (2) make themselves available to respond to the next emergency. Slowing down either of these processes increases the risk to the firefighters and to members of the community who experience the next fire.

The bill also presents logistical concerns. Given the requirements, each guide would be several pages long. It is unclear how firefighters would transport great volumes of paper guides to and from each fire and how the guides would be stored and distributed without becoming contaminated or damaged. The Fire Department is also not in a position to keep up-to-date information about the many categories of information required by the legislation, most of which are outside of the scope of the responsibilities of the Fire Department. These concerns are also true for section (d) of the bill, which would require fire inspectors to transport and distribute the guide at each inspection following a fire.

We understand that the Council would like to provide resources to residents in the aftermath of a fire. However, doing so by placing the burden on the first responders fighting the fire is not workable.

I would like to now pass it over to my colleague from the NYC Department of Buildings who will discuss about Introduction 750.

Good morning, Chairs Sanchez and Ariola and Committee Members, my name is Jamell Isidor, Assistant Commissioner for Administrative Policy and Enforcement. I am joined by my colleagues Yegal Shamash, Deputy Commissioner for Enforcement, Guillermo Patino, Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Legal Affairs, and Frank McCarton, Assistant Commissioner for Emergency Services with the NYC Department of Buildings.

Introduction 750 would require all major and minor violations issued by the Department of Buildings (DOB)—which pertain to non-urgent conditions—to be corrected within 30 days. In recent years, DOB amended its rules to allow these violations to be corrected within 60 days, giving property owners more time to make repairs and avoid penalties following an OATH hearing. The established timeframes account for administrative processes, due process considerations, and the time required for property owners to hire professionals and obtain permits for corrective action. The proposed change could negatively impact small businesses and owners of one- or two-family homes who may lack the capital to complete repairs within 30 days. Requiring corrections within 30 days would also increase DOB's workload, particularly for staff handling permit reviews, certificate approvals, and OATH violation hearings. Violation information, including correction dates, is already publicly available on a building's DOB profile and through NYC Open Data. Therefore, the information being sought is already readily available. The bill would also require applicants seeking a demolition permit from DOB, subsequent to a vacate order issued by HPD, to demonstrate the steps they've taken to correct any violating conditions. That may include submitting financial statements, estimates, and invoices to DOB as part of an application for a demolition permit. DOB does not see the need for such documentation as part of a demolition application. DOB is open to further discussion to better understand this provision's intent and explore potential solutions.

Now, I'd like to pass it over to my colleagues from HPD to talk about The Certificate of No Harassment and Int 817.

Good morning, Chairs Sanchez and Ariola and Committee Members, my name is, AnnMarie Santiago Deputy Commissioner for Enforcement and Neighborhood Services and I am joined by my colleague Yong Ju Kim, Assistant Commissioner of Property Management and Client Services.

Regarding the changes to the Certificate of No Harassment Pilot Program and the criteria for an automatic denial of such Certification, a report from HPD on the program and its effectiveness is due to the City Council in November 2025 and the program will require re-authorization in 2026 by the City Council. We would like to assess the impact of the change recommended by Intro 750 during this period and, if appropriate, make any changes to the program during the reauthorization.

On initial assessment, we have some legal concerns that including administrative orders as a criteria upon which to deny the Certificate. A finding of harassment, unlawful eviction or arson, the current criteria, are determined after due process is given to the owner and so the Department

can use these previous findings as a basis for the denial of the Certificate without additional investigation or review.

The agency's administrative issuance of an Order to Correct does not have the same due process history, which could be problematic in terms of the owners rights to challenge the finding. In addition, in the context of the Pilot Program, permitting a denial of the CONH without a hearing at OATH for the issuance of an AEP administrative order to correct specifically is contradictory to the intent of the program. Existing criteria involving the addition of buildings in AEP to the pilot list is fashioned to qualify the building for the Pilot *after* the building has been discharged to avoid any added delays or administrative hurdles to the owner completing the work required under the order.

Regarding Intro 817, we will not be able to take a stance on that piece of legislation today. The administration is still reviewing and will work with Council on clear follow-ups after the hearing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I, along with my colleagues from FDNY and DOB, look forward to answering your questions.

Dear Chair Ariola, Chair Sanchez and Esteemed Joint-Committee Members:

My name is Michael Gianaris, and I serve as Deputy Majority Leader of the New York State Senate. I am the proud sponsor of Senate Bill [S.3886](#), which would protect New York City tenants who are displaced by fires caused by negligent property owners and their contractors.

I felt compelled to introduce this legislation after a five-alarm fire broke out in an apartment building on 47th avenue in Sunnyside, Queens, just before Christmas Eve in 2023, leaving fourteen individuals injured and hundreds of tenants displaced. The fire started after a contractor hired by the building's owner, A&E Real Estate, used a blowtorch illegally to heat lead paint off a closet door frame. Now, nearly a year and a half later, A&E has still not made the needed repairs to the building to get residents back into their homes or provided stable housing solutions, leaving the entire building vacant.

Throughout this process, Congressmember Velazquez, Borough President Richards, Council Member Won, and my office have worked tirelessly to get A&E to do the right thing for their tenants. We are now joined by newly elected Assemblymember Claire Valdez, who I have partnered with to introduce the legislation that Council Member Won's resolution is in support of. It has become abundantly clear since the fire that a legislative solution is necessary to hold landlords accountable and get New Yorkers back in their homes.

Our legislation would require building owners to cover the costs of temporary housing following a fire that has been determined to be caused by their negligence. By holding them financially liable, the bill would compel owners to get repairs done as expeditiously as possible, and not drag their feet. If property owners don't offer temporary accommodations, the bill empowers the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to advance rent payments on those temporary units and recover funds from the owners, with penalties. Once repairs are complete, the bill would ensure that displaced tenants have a right of first refusal to return to their original unit without being charged a security deposit. The unit would have to be restored with amenities equal to or better than before the fire took place, and should the tenant decide to return, the owner would have to cover any reasonable costs associated with moving back in.

With a citywide vacancy rate just over 1%, it is deeply unfair and unethical to uproot people from their homes and expect them to find alternative housing on their own. Since the Sunnyside fire we continue to see this situation across the City. In Council Member Riley's district approximately 250 tenants have been displaced after a fire ravaged a building owned by one of the City's worst landlords. Council Members Gutierrez and Krishnan, who I share

communities with in Queens and Brooklyn and are spearheading a legislative package of bills before the Council addressing residential fires, have also had to assist tenants facing the same trauma of devastating fires followed by landlords delaying the necessary remediation. It is clear that the Sunnyside fire was not an isolated incident – landlords are forcing tenants out on the street through no fault of their own and doing little to rectify the damage they caused. We must address this growing problem before more New Yorkers end up in this situation.

Thank you for shining a light on this pressing matter and for your interest in supporting the legislation I am sponsoring with Assemblymember Valdez.



CLAIRE VALDEZ
Assemblymember 37th District
Queens County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
Cities
Social Services
Transportation
Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports
Development

MEMBER
Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic
and Asian Legislative Caucus
Legislative Women's Caucus
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force
Task Force on New Americans
Task Force on Women's Issues

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings
Office of Assemblymember Claire Valdez
April 3, 2025

Tenants should not pay the price for negligent landlords. Right now, New York is in the middle of an urgent and deepening housing affordability crisis. With rents skyrocketing, being displaced by a fire can mean months — or even years — of housing insecurity. With limited affordable housing, apartments taken off the market mean an even more strained housing supply for everyone.

In December 2023, 450 lives were upended when a fire tore through an apartment building in Sunnyside, Queens, caused by a contractor's unauthorized use of a blow torch. The affected tenants, the majority of whom are working-class people of color, were left struggling to find safe, adequate housing and rebuild their lives. But this was not and is not an isolated tragedy. In one single fire in the Bronx this past January, 260 residents were left stranded, their homes destroyed, with all their belongings burned or flooded.

In my district, little has changed at the Sunnyside building since the fire, to the great frustration of the many tenants desperate to move back to their homes and community. More than 100 rent-stabilized apartment units — once homes where families put down roots — remain in disrepair and unoccupied. The building owner, A&E Real Estate, has yet to move forward with any substantial reconstruction.

Expecting tenants to secure housing on their own after a devastating fire is unreasonable and unjust. I was proud to work alongside Deputy Senate Majority Leader Michael Gianaris to introduce bill A5427/S3886 to ensure negligent owners are held accountable for fires and to incentivize them to restore the homes of displaced tenants in a timely manner.

I also write in support of City Council Members Jennifer Gutierrez's and Shekar Krishnan's Back Home Act, a legislative package that would provide support, resources, and communications to affected tenants, relocate them locally, and limit landlords' ability to collect insurance payments.

I urge the New York State Legislature and New York City Council to prioritize tenant protections and prevent unnecessary displacement by moving quickly on these important pieces of legislation.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committees on Housing & Buildings and Fire & Emergency Management Oversight – Residential Displacement after Emergencies April 3, 2025

Good morning, Chairs Sanchez and Ariola and thank you for holding this hearing today. I am here on behalf of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso to support the Back Home Act, as proposed by Council Member Gutierrez.

Borough President Reynoso preceded Council Member Gutierrez in representing Williamsburg, Bushwick, and Ridgewood, and understands firsthand why this issue is so important to her district. During his time in the Council and as Borough President, BP Reynoso and his staff have assisted numerous families who have tragically been displaced from their homes by emergencies, especially fires. However, this experience isn't unique to the 34th District. As of March 4, the last day that HPD released its monthly data, more than 2,000 New Yorkers from all over the city were living in emergency shelters after being displaced.

This experience can be massively disruptive for families. In addition to losing all or most of their possessions, these families are often displaced to other neighborhoods, away from jobs, schools, doctors, and support systems. They are then forced to navigate complex and unfamiliar bureaucracies to access City services. Too often, their landlords don't give them a clear timeline for when they can return, and emergency shelter stays are limited. With our city's housing vacancy rate at the lowest it has been since the 1960s and limited affordable housing opportunities available, families who are unable to find permanent housing they can afford will likely end up in the already overcrowded shelter system.

Worse still, some landlords have demolished apartments, intentionally slowed down the process of making repairs, or made renovations that do not accommodate existing tenants' needs in an attempt to collect insurance payments and/or to displace their tenants permanently to raise the rent.

The Back Home Act intends to address many of these issues:

- **Intro 749** will create an Office of Residential Displacement Remediation to assist displaced residents with navigating complicated City systems, provide oversight over agencies' roles in the process, and help ensure that residents can return to their homes in a timely manner.

- **Intro 750** will require landlords to speed up the process of correcting violations and puts safeguards in place to disincentivize them from using poor building conditions to harass and displace tenants.
- **Intro 751** will require the City to create a Residential Fire Emergency Response Guide to help displaced residents understand their rights and what steps to take if they have been displaced.
- **Intro 817** will require the City to consider creating an affordable, City-sponsored renter's insurance program that would provide financial protection against damage to or loss of possessions in an emergency.

Borough President Reynoso also supports other bills in the Back Home Act, sponsored by Council Member Krishnan, which this Committee heard last year. He urges the Council to move these bills quickly as well:

- **Intro 607** will require HPD to relocate tenants who have experienced emergency displacement to the same or an adjacent community if they request it.
- **Intro 608** will require a proactive response from HPD to assist with recovery of possessions and relocation in the event of a vacate order, and will hold landlords accountable for making repairs in a timely manner when tenants are displaced due to poor conditions.
- **Intro 609** will require HPD to report on the use of its special repair fund.

It is worth noting that these proposals are not limited to displacement due to fires, but cover all types of emergencies. Unfortunately, due to climate change, the City is experiencing more frequent drought conditions that can lead to fire danger, as well as increased coastal and stormwater flooding. According to the NYC Panel on Climate Change, climate-related emergencies will continue to increase in frequency and severity in the coming years as sea levels continue to rise and average annual temperatures and precipitation levels continue to increase. Passing the Back Home Act is one of many ways we can prepare for this, while protecting tenants and holding landlords accountable. Thank you.

REBNY Testimony | April 4, 2025

The Real Estate Board of New York to The City Council Committees on Housing and Buildings and Fire and Emergency Management on Intro 750 of 2024

The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is the City's leading real estate trade association representing commercial, residential, and institutional property owners, builders, managers, investors, brokers, salespeople, and other organizations and individuals active in New York City real estate. REBNY appreciates this opportunity to provide comments on the New York Fire Department's (FDNY) preliminary budget.

Currently, by rule from the Department of Buildings (DOB), building and business owners have 60 days to address certain violations that are not immediately hazardous before facing an OATH hearing and potential fines. This bill would shorten that timeframe to 30 days. In addition, the bill would require DOB to file paperwork regarding the length of time it takes owners to correct violations, and it would require owners to file additional information when seeking to demolish buildings that have been served a vacate order. Finally, it would add orders of correction as a factor in determining if an order of no harassment for the entire building should be issued.

Although REBNY understands the need to fix conditions for which not immediately hazardous violations have been issued, we do not see the need to shorten the timeframe to make such fixes from 60 to 30 days. Such a change is likely to cause owners, particularly smaller property owners who have less wherewithal and may lack in-house staff to handle agency related paperwork all together, to face OATH hearings and fines in a timeframe that the agency by rule has established as unreasonable. It is the stated goal of the current mayoral administration to make it easier for small businesses to thrive, and the proposed change would work against that goal.

In addition, REBNY does not see the need to impose additional filing requirements on the private sector or on DOB. DOB is already facing resource and personnel challenges that can make meeting their current mandates and responsibilities difficult to address in a timely manner. Adding new responsibilities should be done judiciously. The data that DOB would be filing under this law is already readily accessible to the public through, among other things, DOB's website and on NYC Open Data. Additionally, when it comes to the demolition of units, there are existing rules and requirements in place at the state and local level to provide protection to tenants.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

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NATIONAL ELEVATOR INDUSTRY, INC.

SETTING STANDARDS IN MOTION

**National Elevator Industry, Inc.
Statement for the Record
Hearing on Int 0750-2024
Amending Section 28 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York
in Relation to the Timeline for Corrections and for Other Purposes**

**Submitted to
New York City Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings**

**New York, New York
April 3, 2025**

Chairperson Sanchez and members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings, I am Savannah Clarkston, Director for Government Affairs for the National Elevator Industry, Inc. (NEII). NEII is the leading trade association for companies that manufacture, install, and maintain elevators, escalators, moving walkways, and other building transportation products. NEII members collectively represent over eighty-five percent of the work hours in the building transportation industry and the Association represents several companies that do business in the city of New York.

NEII welcomes the opportunity to comment on Int 0750-2024, a bill to amend the administrative code of the city of New York in relation to the timeframe to correct department of buildings violations, requiring additional documentation when an owner seeks to demolish a building, and expanding the certification of no harassment program. The industry appreciates the continued interest and support of members of the New York City Council in ensuring timely compliance with the codes and standards of the city of New York to protect public safety and the safety of the workforce in various trades. In this case, however, NEII has significant concerns with the proposed amendment to section 28-204.2 of the administrative code of the city of New York.

Int 0750-2024 would amend §28-204.2 to remove the discretion currently available to the Commissioner of the Department of Buildings (DOB) in ensuring compliance with an order to certify correction when a notice of violation is issued. In testimony provided to the Committee, DOB noted that it exercises the administrative discretion authorized by current law to allow up to 60 days for applicable violations under section 28 to be executed and certified. The Department uses this discretion under rulemaking to address reasonable delays due to administrative processes, due process considerations in the context of hearings and appeals, adequate time for building and property owners to coordinate with contractors to make the repair, or for permits to be acquired.

From the perspective of the building transportation industry, the repair of elevators and other devices and equipment may require extensive planning, including securing the approval of repair work from building owners, procurement of the necessary parts and materials for the repair, which can include long-lead items, and ensuring the proper specialized labor skills are available for the job. These steps are

essential to properly addressing violations. For example, a correction could require work to hoist ropes. The elevator technicians with the specialized training to hang hoist ropes may not always be immediately available, a circumstance that could extend repair timelines and necessitate an extension by the Commissioner. In other cases, a device repair may involve complex engineering or mechanical challenges that may require additional time to plan and execute properly and safely. NEII believes the flexibility currently provided to the Commissioner is reasonably defined. The industry's experience is that the Commissioner has exercised this discretion appropriately by granting extensions on an as-needed basis while ensuring that any identified hazardous conditions are promptly remediated.

The industry is committed to completing essential repairs required by building owners efficiently while upholding the highest safety standards. To achieve this, administrative timelines must allow for the site-specific challenges inherent in building transportation maintenance. NEII recommends that the Committee amend Int 0750-2024 to maintain the discretion afforded the Commissioner of the Department of Buildings which is currently provided by §28-204.2 of the administrative code of the city of New York. NEII staff and member companies are available to provide any additional information as needed.

Submitted by: Savannah Clarkston
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CAA AV: Organizing Asian Communities testimony to the City of New York City Council

Submitted by Sasha Wijeyeratne, Executive Director of CAA AV: Organizing Asian Communities on behalf of Stabilizing NYC

On behalf of CAA AV: Organizing Asian Communities (CAA AV), I am honored to submit this testimony as a member and in strong support of the Stabilizing New York City (SNYC) initiative, a coalition of legal, advocacy, and community organizing nonprofits that build power through outreach, tenant rights education, leadership development, and legal support. This year Stabilizing New York City is requesting \$5 million in City Council initiative funding to support the eleventh year of our highly successful and collective work to combat harassment, evictions, and the loss of affordable housing at the hands of predatory equity and speculative investors across the city.

CAA AV is based in Manhattan Chinatown and Astoria, Queens, and has organized thousands of working class, Asian immigrants throughout NYC around affordable housing and safety since 1986. One of our recent significant victories includes successfully organizing hundreds of tenants in an Astoria building housing predominately Bengali families who were living without cooking gas and hot water over 9 months, housed in units under severe disrepair—including collapsing ceilings, and were regularly harassed and intimidated by their landlord. After months of organizing, we succeeded in pushing the landlord to turn gas and hot water on in the building. In addition to preventing self-eviction and displacement, this win galvanized our base, laying the foundation for us to continue to advocate for tenants across the neighborhood, which is rapidly developing as a site for luxury housing.

Through SNYC, CAA AV has had the opportunity to strengthen our work alongside 19 other legal and housing organizations. Together, we have held over 5,000 convenings and workshops, built over 200 tenant associations, participated in nearly 500 direct tenant actions and more to protect working class New Yorkers from landlord abuse in an increasingly unaffordable city. We believe that housing justice is racial justice. As predatory equity and speculation disproportionately forces tenants in BIPOC communities, decades of government disinvestment in communities of color has been exacerbated by redlining, speculation, and overleveraging. Landlords and lenders continue to benefit from systemic racism by going unpunished and wield power over renters through denying services, neglecting repairs, and illegal construction. Rarely are they held accountable by city and state agencies.

Courts have been overwhelmed with eviction cases since the moratorium was lifted and tenants struggle to pay rent. It has been reported that there have been over 100,000 eviction cases in NYC since the moratorium was lifted in 2022. SNYC tenants grapple with landlords who use a variety of harassing tactics to displace tenants to flip buildings out of regulatory status to maximize profits over people, including:

- Aggressively pursuing eviction cases
- Refusing to make repairs, forcing tenants to live in dangerous & unhealthy conditions
- Warehousing vacant apartments, hoping to ultimately circumvent rent regulations, and more.

Stabilizing NYC funding will allow us to hold tenant Know Your Rights trainings, connect our members to legal support, and protect our members from evictions and landlord harassment. For the past several years, the City Council generously awarded us \$3,700,000 to continue our work. ***With the additional increase of \$1.3 million, we can protect more homes, win more building improvements and strengthen community organizing across the City.***



**Testimony in Support of the Back Home Act (Intros. 607-609, 749-751, 817;
Reso. 307)**

April 3rd, 2025

Good afternoon, my name is Gabriel Fantacone and I am a Civic Engagement Organizer at Churches United for Fair Housing. We represent a broad coalition of 25,000 members through our 40 church partners in Brooklyn and Queens, and we are committed to building comprehensive housing justice for working New Yorkers. CUFFH is proud to stand in support of the Back Home Act, as the legislation reflects our core values of dignity, justice, and safety for tenants facing displacement and increasingly volatile housing conditions across our city.

Tenants in New York City live at an ever-increased risk of harm, trauma, and displacement from a range of disasters and emergencies. In just the past few years, we've witnessed the devastating effects of hurricanes, winter freezes, and numerous human-caused fires, like the recent brush fires in Prospect Park and the tragic residential fire that rocked communities in the Bronx. Meanwhile, affordability is plummeting and tenant protections are being eroded, with waves of evictions impacting our members again and again. These harms are deeply interconnected. Tenants, especially those living in unsafe housing conditions, too often receive little support or protection from landlords or housing authorities. This cannot continue.

That is why we are here today to reaffirm our belief in strong protections for all tenants, and in the security needed to confront a future where emergencies of all kinds — natural, structural, or human-caused — are becoming more frequent and more severe. The Back Home Act is a vital step toward ensuring that our city's commitment to affordable housing includes robust emergency protections and enshrines the right to return home after a disaster. Tenants deserve to know that they won't be permanently displaced after tragedy strikes.

We often hear stories of the routine exploitation faced by CUFFH's tenant members — many of whom are immigrants or people of color — who are left to navigate disaster recovery alone. Despite their essential contributions to our city, these tenants struggle to support their families and lack the safety nets needed to recover from crises. The Back Home Act is essential because it ensures that city agencies are equipped with the tools to protect tenants during and after emergencies, and to prevent landlords from using moments of crisis to profit from others' vulnerability.

The Back Home Act is the legislation working New Yorkers need to seriously address the intersections of housing injustice and emergency preparedness. We especially recognize the vulnerable position immigrant tenants are in — targeted by federal enforcement AND predatory

landlords. This bill ensures that these tenants are included in vital protections and that they have the right to fair, safe, and continuously habitable housing even in the face of disaster.

CUFFH commends the Committees on Housing and Fire for bringing forward this important bill. We urge the swift passage of the Back Home Act (Intros. 607-609, 749-751, 817, and Reso. 307), so we can establish permanent protections for tenants against disasters, displacement, and injustice.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to the well-being of working New Yorkers.

Contact Information:

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TESTIMONY OF THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

City Council Committee on
Housing and Buildings

Re: T2025-3134: Oversight – Residential Displacement After Emergencies

April 3, 2025

Thank you, Chairperson Sanchez along with members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings and the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management for the opportunity to provide testimony today. We welcome the Council’s efforts to ensure that the City provides necessary services to displaced residents.

This testimony is submitted on behalf of The Legal Aid Society, the nation’s oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization. The Society is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal, and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform since 1876. Through three major practices — Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights — the Society handles nearly 200,000 cases a year in city, state, and federal courts. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse-based offices in New York City, and nearly 2,400 attorneys, paralegals, social workers, investigators and support staff, along with volunteer help coordinated by

the Society's Pro Bono program, we provide comprehensive legal services to fulfill our mission that no New Yorker should be denied access to justice because of poverty.

City Council members now seek to amend four local laws and introduce one resolution to formalize social, legal, and economic support to help displaced residents. In proposing this, the City Council has begun to improve the process for tenants to seek services and repairs when displaced due to an emergency. However, there is still more work that needs to be done. Consequently, the Legal Aid Society supports this package of bills with amendments and urges committee members to provide additional resources for displaced residents that include:

- (1) a team to help displaced residents navigate the process;
- (2) clear and concise public notices;
- (3) enforced security and a process to return to their building; and
- (4) waivers for residents to share contact information.

Background

The Legal Aid Society's Civil Practice addresses a broad range of legal problems, including; housing, homelessness prevention, and foreclosure prevention; family law and domestic violence; employment issues faced by low-wage workers; public assistance; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits; disability-related assistance; health law; HIV/AIDS and chronic diseases; elder law; tax law for low-income workers; consumer law; education law; immigration law; community development legal assistance; and reentry and reintegration matters for formerly incarcerated clients returning to the community.

The Legal Aid Society has prioritized housing assistance throughout our 140-year history. The Civil Practice's Housing Justice Unit is our largest practice area and comprised more than 50% of our total caseload during the last fiscal year. In recognition of the myriad of challenges our clients face, The Legal Aid Society organizes our Housing Justice Unit into several programs. Our Housing Justice Unit - Tenant Defense (HJU-TD) practice, which is present in all five counties, offers critical legal services to prevent homelessness through direct representation of tenants facing eviction in nonpayment and holdover proceedings. We help low-income New Yorkers maintain affordable housing, ensure landlords maintain habitability standards, obtain, and preserve rent subsidies for clients, fight illegal rent overcharges and prevent evictions.

In addition to our representation of tenants in eviction proceedings, The Legal Aid Society's Housing Justice Unit – Group Advocacy (HJU-GA) represents tenant groups to preserve and expand the stock of affordable housing throughout New York City. Through HJU-GA, The Legal Aid Society provides technical and legal assistance and direct representation to hundreds of displaced residents across the five boroughs after they are required to vacate their homes due to an emergency. As such, we work closely with city agencies to provide clear and concise information to residents navigating displacement. The services and programs provided by the city are vital sources of information and, as such, are crucial to getting residents back into their homes safely and efficiently.

Services and Programs for Displaced Residents

Unfortunately, during the last fiscal year, 476 single adults and more than 500 families, including nearly 300 families with children, were displaced due to an emergency and needed the

various emergency services and programs offered by the city.¹ Families with children stay in the disaster shelters for an average of nearly nine-and-a-half months, while single men stay for an average of nearly 20 months.² This emergency residential displacement disproportionately affected, and continues to disproportionately affect, Legal Aid Society clients who live in low-income and minority neighborhoods.³

Currently, the New York City Council provides a broad overview of next steps for those affected by emergency residential displacement including the city agencies, services and programs that are available to assist residents through the process of getting back into their homes.⁴ Initially, the Fire Department for the City of New York (“FDNY”) is responsible for declaring the premises safe for city agencies to enter, and subsequently the Department of Buildings (“DOB”) assesses the structural integrity of the building and where it is safe to enter, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (“HPD”) will assess other systems and conditions in the building. These agencies are each responsible for issuing vacate orders, inspecting the premises to determine

¹ Jeanmarie Evelly, *New Laws Aim to Support NYC Tenants Displaced by Fire*, CITYLIMITS, (Sept. 13, 2024) available at: <https://citylimits.org/new-laws-aim-to-support-nyc-tenants-displaced-by-fire/>

² David Brand, *New legislation would speed repairs for fire victims by making NYC landlords pay their rents*, Gothamist (Jan. 30, 2025) available at: <https://gothamist.com/news/new-legislation-would-speed-repairs-for-fire-victims-by-making-nyc-landlords-pay-their-rents>

³ See e.g., Giulia McDonnell Nieto Del Rio, ‘Not Happening in White Communities’: The Data Behind NYC Fires, DOCUMENTED (Jan. 14, 2022) available at: <https://documentedny.com/2022/01/14/bronx-fire-nyc/>; JUSTFIX, *NYC Fire Safety and Your Landlord’s Responsibilities*, (April 26, 2022) available at: <https://www.justfix.org/en/learn/fire-safety-and-violations>; Julia Biedry Gonzalez, *Residential Fires in New York City*, available at <https://www.tableau.com/foundation/data-equity/economic-power/NYC-residential-fires>; Stanton E, Biedry J, Rochlin D, Sheckter CC. *Association of Structural Fires in New York City With Inequities in Safe Heating for Immigrant Communities*. JAMA Netw Open. (Mar. 1, 2023), doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.1575. PMID: 36867409; PMID: PMC9984975 available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9984975/>

⁴ NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL, *NYC Residential Fire Emergency Response Guide*, (2025) available at: <https://council.nyc.gov/nyc-residential-fire-emergency-response-guide/>

habitability and determining the conditions that need to be corrected for a vacate order to be lifted. The American Red Cross is contracted with the city to provide emergency response for residents and determine their needs.⁵ Other agencies and resources available for residents include the Human Resources Administration (“HRA”), the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (“DHCR”), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (“HUD”) rental assistance.⁶

After an emergency occurs that requires residents to vacate the premises, the building owner should contact their insurance company, potentially submit applications for permits to the Department of Buildings, hire vendors to make repairs, and test for asbestos. Displaced residents are advised to connect with the Red Cross, file insurance claims, request utility services be suspended, and provide workers and inspectors access to the premises. HPD, through its Emergency Housing Services unit, provides emergency relocation services and rehousing assistance to households who have been displaced from their homes as a result of fire or city-issued vacate orders.

Main Concerns of Displaced Residents

Despite these programs and services, Residents regularly report to us, and we have personally observed during our service to our clients, that there are significant gaps in the service provided. Residents in all of the buildings we have worked with report that they are overwhelmed by the experience of losing all of their possessions, their homes, their community, and all of the stability that made up their normal lives. They are grateful for the services provided but are dismayed at the failures of this system to support tenants subject to vacate orders.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

Residents report that they need more support understanding what services they are eligible for and how to access them, they need assistance communicating with agencies and addressing individual needs that are not addressed by publicly available information. They also report that their remaining belongings are often stolen because the building is not adequately protected. They are stunned to learn how difficult it is to have a landlord compensate them for lost property, and a vast majority of NYC renters that we work with do not have renters' insurance in part because they are not aware that they need it, and in part because the cost is an additional expense that low-income and working people struggle to absorb.

Residents regularly report that they are given little or no notice when they will be denied a hotel or shelter placement and are retraumatized as they try, often without success to communicate with HPD's emergency housing program to extend their stay so that they can transition successfully. Residents report that their multigenerational families are separated into family shelters and adult only congregate shelters. The hotels and shelters are often far from their children's schools, their medical providers, or workplaces. The shelters regularly impose rules and curfews that force residents to lose out on work or other social interactions. The shelters often do not provide full kitchens or adequate cooking facilities which leads to higher food expenses and less healthy food options. In adult-only shelters, residents must share bathrooms and kitchens with unfamiliar people, causing discomfort and anxiety.

Residents also do not fully understand their rights to return to their homes once repairs are completed and would benefit from greater information from their elected officials and legal services providers. If the American Red Cross and HPD could share residents' contact information with

elected officials and legal services providers, it would ensure that tenants are better able to understand and exercise their rights to return to their apartments.

Residents also need to have more detailed information about what work is being done to restore their apartments and what the realistic time frames are for restoration. In order to restore stability in their lives, vacated residents need to have a clear understanding of the work that is required to be able to move back to their homes and what the plan is for getting that work done. While some of this information is publicly available, it is located in places that are hard for advocates to identify and even harder for the average resident to access. The lack of transparency and lack of enforcement by city agencies and the courts, permit landlords to undermine current protections for residents, forcing residents to remain in shelters for years or risk losing their apartments altogether.

Int 0749-2024

The Legal Aid Society supports the creation of an office and online portal to assist displaced residents to navigate available services but urges committee members to (1) broaden the scope of residents eligible for these services to include tenants subject to vacate orders for any disaster not only fire or natural disasters, (2) require any new office assisting displaced residents coordinate receipt of and access to services with HPD and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Health (“DOHMH”) and other relevant agencies; and (3) require the submission of publicly available monitoring reports.

Int 0749-2024 creates an Office of Displacement Remediation within the Office of Emergency Management (“OEM”) to provide information on services available to individuals

displaced by residential fires and other natural disasters. This definition of the scope of the agency's responsibilities does not include human-caused disasters that cause emergency displacement of residents and ensures that displaced residents will not all be provided the same services. For example, the legislation as written would not cover the residents of 1644 and 1646 Park Ave, New York, NY 10035, who were displaced due to a gas explosion in 2014⁷ nor would it cover the residents of 1915 Billingsley Terrace, Bronx NY, 10453, where residents were displaced due to a man-made construction accident in December, 2023.⁸ The language provided in this amendment arbitrarily or inadvertently leaves residents who have been displaced by emergencies not caused by fires or natural disasters without access to the information and support that they acutely need. The Legal Aid Society urges committee members to expand this language to include vacate orders due to any dangerous or hazardous conditions.

While Int 0749-2024 additionally requires the Office of Displacement Remediation, newly created within OEM, to coordinate with relevant agencies, the language provided does not include coordinating communication and compliance with the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (“HPD”)⁹ and the Department of Health and Mental Health (“DOHMH”), two key agencies that serve tenants in the wake of a residential disaster. HPD is the main agency tasked with providing emergency housing and determining the habitability of a building, and DOHMH monitors housing conditions that expose residents to toxic or dangerous substances in their residential

⁷ 3 Dead, Several Missing After Explosion Levels Buildings in East Harlem, CBS NEWS NEW YORK, (Mar. 12, 2014) available at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/explosion-reported-at-harlem-building/>

⁸ Emily Swanson, *Final Report Finds Faulty Engineering Plans Caused 1915 Billingsley Terrace Building Collapse*, BRONX TIMES, (Nov. 29, 2024).

⁹

environments including mold, lead, and asbestos, all of which can be exposed during clean up and construction after a disaster. Displaced residents require these necessary services during the aftermath of an emergency and their collaboration and effective communication with the other agencies covered by this legislation will ensure that the city agencies are meeting their obligations to residents and providing complete information to tenants. The bill should be amended to add oversight of and coordination between FDNY, DOB, and DEP, HPD and DOHMH.

While Int 0749-2024 requires a newly created office within OEM to monitor agency compliance with procedures governing inspections conducted by relevant agencies, the provided language lacks enforcement mechanisms. To bolster this, required publicly available monitoring reports should be provided so that all New York City residents have access to information regarding the compliance of city agencies.

Therefore, the Legal Aid Society supports the amendment listed under Int 0749-2024 and urges the Committee to provide additional information to displaced residents.

Int 0750-2024

The Legal Aid Society supports the addition of a timeframe to correct department of buildings violations and requiring additional documentation when an owner seeks to demolish a building but urges the Committee to (1) also provide information regarding the condition of the building immediately after the event that caused the residents to vacate as well as the work and timeline necessary to correct the conditions; and (2) ensure that demolition approvals are issued only after an approval from the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (“DHCR”). However, the

Legal Aid Society has reservations about expanding the certification of the no harassment program because it may substantially delay repairs and restoration of residents to their homes.

Int 070-2024 requiring annual reporting on certification of correction of violations under the building codes and the corrective and enforcement actions would greatly benefit displaced residents. Information from DOB that is easily accessible and publicly available assists displaced residents who are seeking to navigate services and programs provided after an emergency. Additional information regarding building conditions and scope of work needed for repairs would clarify the steps needed for residents to move back into their homes safely and efficiently. This information is essential for families and individuals to plan their housing, transportation, schooling, and medical needs in the short and long term.

Int 070-2024 also requiring documentation where a landlord seeks demolition of a building subject to a vacate order is necessary information for displace residents. However, the language supplied here does not require a building owner to submit approval from DHCR for demolition for rent stabilized buildings. The failure to do so harms displaced rent stabilized residents who often do not have a chance to adequately respond to demolition plans. Involving DHCR allows displaced rent stabilized tenants to provide a response and voice their concerns regarding demolition of their rent stabilized units and ensures compliance with the local rent stabilization laws that are designed to preserve and protect the rent stabilized housing stock during our ongoing housing emergency. Lastly, Int 070-2024 adds that a building will be denied a certificate of no harassment if there is an order to correct a housing maintenance code violation that has been issued during a stated time

period. This may make it more difficult for residents to move back into their homes after a vacate order has been issued.

Therefore, the Legal Aid Society supports, in part, the amendment listed under Int 0750-2024 and urges the Committee to provide additional protective language for displaced residents.

Int 0751-2024

The Legal Aid Society supports the creation of a residential fire emergency response guide.

Int 0751-2024 requires FDNY to create and distribute an emergency response guide which would likely benefit displaced residents. However, the language of Int 0751-2024 fails to state how the newly created office within OEM under Int 0749-2024 will coordinate with FDNY. Int 0751-2024 must clarify how OEM will be notified of an emergency and how vital information regarding emergency services will be provided to displaced residents. Further, it is not clear what occurs when the emergency is not based on a fire such that FDNY is not involved.

Therefore, the Legal Aid Society supports the amendment under Int 0751-2024, and urges the Committee to provide additional information to displaced residents.

Int 0817-2024

The Legal Aid Society supports a study and report on the feasibility of a low-cost and city-sponsored renter's insurance program and urges the Committee to (1) ensure that any final report be publicly available on the website of the conducting office or agency and (2) conduct a public awareness campaign about the need for renters insurance under the current state of the law.

Despite the benefits of renter's insurance, many residents are unaware of the need for, and benefits of, renters' insurance and others may not be able to afford the cost of coverage.¹⁰ As such, a report on the feasibility of a low-cost and city-sponsored renters' insurance program would provide valuable information regarding the possibility of such a program. However, the language in Int 0817-2024 does not state that this report would be publicly accessible. To further transparency in city governance, we urge committee members to ensure that any report is made publicly available.

Further, Int 0817-2024 does not provide for the feasibility of a public awareness campaign about the need for renters insurance. The City Council acknowledges the benefits of having renters' insurance and suggests displaced residents file insurance claims where appropriate.¹¹ Yet little information is provided to tenants regarding renters insurance, particularly regarding the benefits for displaced tenants whose renters insurance may be able to help pay for temporary housing. Int 0817-2024 would benefit from language providing a public awareness campaign regarding the benefits of renters insurance and the limits of their landlord's insurance coverage. Therefore, the Legal Aid Society supports the amendment under Int 0817-2024 and urges the Committee to provide additional information to residents about the possible need for renters' insurance.

Res 0307-2024

¹⁰ The average yearly cost of renter's insurance in New York City is \$195.96. Augustine Reyes Chan, *How Much Does Renters Insurance Cost in New York*, PROPERTYNest, (Jan. 22, 2025) available at:

<https://www.propertynest.com/blog/rent/how-much-renters-insurance-cost-ny/>

¹¹ NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL, *NYC Residential Fire Emergency Response Guide*, (2025) available at:

<https://council.nyc.gov/nyc-residential-fire-emergency-response-guide/>

The Legal Aid Society supports a three-month limitation on the duration of time for which a landlord can collect payment from loss of rents insurance coverage without conducting meaningful repairs to an uninhabitable unit and urges the Committee to strengthen this resolution by providing either HPD or tenants with funds to making meaningful repairs.

However, there is no need for a building owner to wait three months after receiving money to require the commencement of repairs as work can occur immediately upon receipt of funds. At a minimum, a building owner should immediately start stabilizing the building, seek estimates for the work, and obtain necessary permits. The City Council has already recognized the need for this,¹² however, unfortunately, delays in initiating repairs are standard experiences for our clients. For example, displaced residents on 89th Street in Jackson Heights were subject to more than a year of delays in obtaining meaningful repairs.¹³ Additionally, residents in 2490 Davidson Avenue in The Bronx were promised that they could move back into their building after a devastating fire within six months, but no repairs were made to the building for over a year.¹⁴ Similarly, residents at 1420 Noble Avenue in The Bronx have waited for 19 months to return to their homes and the repairs have still not begun in earnest.¹⁵ An HPD inspector stated that the landlord for 1420 Nobel Avenue has

¹² NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL, *NYC Residential Fire Emergency Response Guide*, (2025) available at: <https://council.nyc.gov/nyc-residential-fire-emergency-response-guide/> (“After the fire has been extinguished, **the building management should send workers the same-day.**”) (emphasis in original).

¹³ Andrea Pineda-Salgado, *The Victims of the 89th Street Fire are Still Struggling More than a Year Later*, EPICENTER NYC, (July 26, 2022), available at: <https://epicenter-nyc.com/the-victims-of-the-89th-street-fire-are-still-struggling-more-than-a-year-later/>

¹⁴ Priscilla DeGregory and Bernadette Hogan, *NYC Residents Forced into Homeless Shelters After Apartment Fire Sue Landlord Six Months After Blaze*, New York Post, (Feb. 7 2023).

¹⁵ David Brand, *After Fire, A Years-Long Wait to Return Home in New York City*, Gothamist, (Jan. 28, 2025) available at: <https://gothamist.com/news/after-fire-a-years-long-wait-to-return-home-in-new-york-city>

“failed to show good faith effort that the fire-abatement work is getting done expeditiously to restore the tenants to their occupancy.”¹⁶

Therefore, the Legal Aid Society supports Res 0307-2024 and urges the Committee to provide additional information to displaced residents.

The Legal Aid Society's Further Recommendation for Displaced Residents

Displaced residents are often overwhelmed when trying to keep their families together and plan for all the things that they must replace and rebuild after an emergency occurs. They report to the Legal Aid Society that they are often unable to process all of the information that they are given and either do not know what services are available, if they are eligible for said services, or have a lot of follow up questions and specific concerns related to their personal situations. Or they may struggle to find temporary or permanent replacement housing that they can afford that is close to their work, school, or medical provider.

The process is opaque. Displaced residents are often stunned to learn that their families can be separated, that they can be sent to congregate shelters where bathrooms, kitchens, and common areas are shared with strangers. It is often new information for displaced residents that they do not have priority for subsidies or housing lotteries. They do not know if any of the temporary housing will allow them to keep their beloved pets. Lastly, displaced residents are often unaware of the amount of work it takes to fight with both their landlord's insurance and their own insurance, if they have it, to receive compensation or ensure that property damage is covered. Yet often the most

¹⁶ *Id.*

challenging piece of information to come to terms with for displaced residents is that their landlords can delay repairs for years without any consequences.

After working with hundreds of displaced residents, The Legal Aid Society has learned about the pitfalls and success of the program, and would like to identify four practical changes for displaced residents:

1. Emergency Response Teams or Human Navigators to connect displaced residents to available emergency and social services

A guide or list of services, whether online or in paper form, while important, does not allow for residents to ask follow-up questions or find information relating directly to their individual needs. Displaced residents seek guidance from someone to help them problem solve until they are able to move back to their homes or other permanent housing.

2. Clear and concise public notices of when actions will be taken with respect to the repairs to their homes and their ability to return.

Displaced residents routinely do not have access to information surrounding when they can expect repairs to begin. Nor are they provided clear information about when they can reasonably expect to return to their homes. This inability to plan places additional burdens on already vulnerable residents, as they cannot make any decisions regarding work, school, or other choices about their lives. Having access to someone who can provide a simple timeline or real time information regarding their building would alleviate further stress and anxiety for displaced residents.

3. Enforcement to ensure that their buildings and property are safely secured for when residents are finally able to retrieve them, and a clear process for being able to collect their belongings when it is safe to do so.

Displaced residents have repeatedly found that the remains of their belongings were stolen as the building was not properly secured. As such, they have lost family heirlooms, mementos, and other irreplaceable possessions. The despair that occurs after a disaster is then felt once more as they experience loss for a second time.

4. ARC and HPD should offer waivers to residents to permit them to share resident names and contact information with elected officials and legal service providers.

Residents do not fully understand their rights to return to their homes once repairs are completed and would benefit from greater information from their elected officials and legal services providers. If the American Red Cross and HPD could share the resident information with city council members and legal services providers, it would ensure that tenants are better able to understand and exercise their rights to services and their rights to return to their apartments.

Therefore, displaced residents would greatly benefit from (1) someone to help them navigate the process; (2) clear and concise public notices; (3) enforced security and a process to return to their building; and (4) waivers for residents to share contact information.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the respective committees on this critical issue. The Legal Aid Society supports all efforts to provide clear and concise information to displaced residents.

In order to continue the work that this package of bills begins, additional legislation needs to address shelter conditions, clarify the process by which residents can access their possessions once a vacate order has been implemented, mandate the relevant agencies to be more service-oriented or customer friendly, provide teams to support residents during crises, or address the need for vouchers or priority in housing lotteries for displaced residents. We also refer you to our testimony submitted on or about April 25, 2024, to the Committee on Housing and Buildings Hearing on Building Integrity.

We look forward to working with the Committee on Housing, along with other community stakeholders, to strengthen services and programs for displaced residents.

Respectfully Submitted:

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April 2, 2025

New York City Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings
250 Broadway, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10007

RE: Int 750 Comments on proposed amendments to the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to the timeframe to correct department of buildings violations, requiring additional documentation when an owner seeks to demolish a building, and expanding the certification of no harassment program.

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this issue. Verizon is committed to ensuring the safety and integrity of our properties and is fully aware of the importance of conducting timely corrective repairs to maintain building safety and compliance with applicable regulations.

We understand and support the underlying objective of this bill: to protect public safety and ensure that buildings are properly maintained. However, we would like to express some concerns about the challenges we face in meeting this 30-day time frame, particularly in instances where more complex repairs are required.

As a company that owns and operates a significant number of buildings, we often deal with situations where corrective repairs can involve substantial planning, sourcing of materials, coordination with contractors, and compliance with local regulations. In certain cases, these steps may take longer than the 30-day period specified in the bill. Rigidly enforcing this time frame could result in undue pressure on property owners, leading to rushed repairs that might not meet the necessary safety and quality standards.

We are fully committed to completing necessary repairs as promptly as possible and in a manner that ensures both safety and long-term functionality. However, we believe that more flexibility is

April 2, 2025
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needed in some cases to allow for the appropriate time to address complex issues thoroughly and correctly.

We respectfully request your consideration on this matter to allow for navigating some of the potential challenges between the bills objectives and the practical realities when dealing with the nuances of maintaining properties.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

April Horton

Testimony of Andrew Sokolof Diaz

Cofounder and Copresident

89th Street Tenants Unidos Association (2 buildings, 132 Rent Stabilized Units)

Jackson Heights, Queens

When an 8-alarm fire occurred in my building in April 2021, my wife, our 2-month old baby and dog were all displaced and required to live in a hotel far away from our home in Jackson Heights, Queens, while my mother-in-law, who had been living with us, was placed elsewhere.

We faced enormous financial burdens as a direct result of our temporary housing. For example, because my wife was unable to breastfeed for several weeks due to the stress of the incident, we had to purchase expensive baby formula for our child. Further, because we did not have a kitchen in our temporary housing, we had to eat our daily meals from restaurants; often at fast food chains. While I tried sourcing nutritional foods and meals, particularly for my wife who was still attempting to nurse, it was incredibly challenging because we were staying within a food desert. Adding to our issues, my car broke down, adding hundreds to several thousands of dollars in expenses which ultimately led me give up my vehicle.

Additionally, due to the fire, we had to replace our possessions. My wife repurchased maternity clothing, which is more expensive than regular women's clothing, averaging several hundred dollars, ~\$300-\$400. I also had to buy myself a new set of men's clothing. Buying baby diapers again, after we lost our inventory, as well as another car seat, bassinet, pillows, medicines, toys, added around \$1,000 to \$1,500 to our expenses. We relied on donations as much as possible, but during the pandemic and with a baby, we wanted to limit the transmission of diseases.

We had to use taxis and app-based transport platforms like Lyft and Uber to get to sudden appointments for housing interviews with HPD and to submit paperwork under arbitrary deadlines by HPD staff.

Due to the 8-alarm fire in April 2021, one of the largest since 9/11, the children, adults and seniors living in my building had difficulty obtaining their medications and disability equipment. While we were lucky that many residents were able to coordinate with Elmhurst Hospital HHC, many others who experience displacement do not have this privilege. The inability to get necessary and life altering medications and equipment during displacement could have serious implications for a resident's health, and their family, compounding the problems residents already faced.

In order to truly assist tenants, the city council must (1) build additional NYC HPD shelter housing in Queens immediately; (2) coordinate an immediate rapid response protocol for displaced residents with their local public hospital (NYC HHC); (3) mitigate displacement by relocating residents and their animal companions as close as possible to their home neighborhood; (4) ensure displaced residents obtain immediate access to their homes and units to obtain remaining identity and financial documents; (5) ensure displaced rent stabilized tenants

are protected; (6) provide nutritional food assistance on-site at temporary residences; (7) streamline the overall application process for DHCR RA-81; (8) provide displaced residents with housing discrimination resources, education, and direct service; and (9) extend hotel shelter stays for displaced people to 1 month minimum

1) Build Additional NYC HPD shelter housing in Queens immediately.

- a. Queens is the largest borough and second most populated with some of the highest population density in the entire City and country without 1 single Queens HPD shelter for displaced residents.
- b. Every instance of displacement, whether small or large-scale, displaces Queens residents short and long-term from returning to live in their communities as HPD shelters exist in the other outer boroughs only. Currently, HPDs shelter limits facilitate displacement from Queens as it heavily develops and gentrifies working-class, immigrant communities and environmental justice communities.

2) Coordinate an immediate rapid response protocol for displaced residents with local public hospital (NYC HHC) to receive:

- a. Prescription medication replacements (including disability equipment) and troubleshooting support.
- b. Coordination of mental health support services, on-site and virtual for displaced residents. This service often goes ignored during the displacement emergency and in the aftermath.
- c. Priority for vaccination services, especially during a pandemic wave, or seasonal viral spread peak periods like for influenza, pneumonia, RSV etc.
- d. Coordination should be implemented between NYCEM, FDNY, Red Cross, and any other relevant agencies.

3) Mitigate displacement by relocating residents and their animal companions as close as possible to their home neighborhood.

- a. Our family and many had to take a hotel shelter near the Rockaways from Jackson Heights because we have a small dog. Many had to choose to separate from their pets, often emotional support animals (ESA) because of the lack of hotels accepting dogs nor exempting this due to the emergency.
- b. Remaining in the community is vitally important to mitigating the effects of displacement to search for housing, attend school, medical appointments and recurring medical procedures (dialysis, treatments, therapy), as well as for shopping local cultural or nutritional needs.

c. Oftentimes, hotel contracts with Red Cross and NYC HPD are made in far away remote food desert locations in the same borough or outer boroughs, causing significant impacts on displaced tenants and residents. This translates to an added burden of commuting on transit paying multi-zone fares to get back to the community for the day, multiple days a week.

4) Ensure displaced residents obtain immediate access to their homes and units to obtain identity and financial documents.

a. City agencies must coordinate throughout the displacement emergency to provide access to residents to access personal belongings.

b. The longer residents do not obtain access, the higher the risk of burglaries and thefts including identity theft, potentially delaying emergency services for displaced residents.

5) Ensure displaced rent stabilized tenants are protected.

a. Some kind of mechanism to ensure displaced tenants are given priority versus a market rate prospective tenant, which can and does add to the displacement and gentrification effect.

b. Some ability or incentive to protect the rent amount in the relocation.

c. Waive owner's ability to reclaim a unit for their own family or purposes - from a displaced or formerly displaced tenant seeking housing or relocation. This prioritizes the affected people and protects them from displacement or being targeted in retaliation for any efforts to organize tenants.

6) Provide nutritional food assistance on-site at temporary residences.

a. Hotel shelters are often located in food deserts and the food costs are very high for already displaced people. Providing cold/hot meals would relieve this burden and should be coordinated with local pantries to target food waste and to build into the food donation network or local school food system.

7) Streamline the overall application process for DHCR RA-81.

a. For displaced residents like us from 2 large rent stabilized buildings in particular, repairs were expected to take 3-5 years, long-term.

b. Streamlining the DHCR RA-81 for an entire building's tenants to be automated if there is a declared Vacate Order.

c. The burden on tenants to write specific \$1 monthly checks or money orders and not be allowed to pay several months in advance is unnecessary. It is also an added financial cost for

displaced tenants to have to get money orders, mail \$1 amounts, pay postal fees for certified mail receipts, and or visit the Owner when already displaced from the community.

d. Ensuring DHCR RA-81 and all forms related to displacement and related services are provided in the 10 designated city-wide languages per Local Law 30.

8) Provide displaced residents with housing discrimination resources, education, and direct services.

a. Residents overwhelmingly face housing discrimination after a displacement event whether it be for having multiple children, their immigration status, refusing to take a housing voucher or subsidy program, not having credit, etc. Coordinating a comprehensive approach with on-site services at hotel shelters is essential to helping residents find housing as soon as possible.

b. Residents faced enormous real estate fees (notaries) and literal scams in the aftermath of the fire we experienced which further harms families and their ability to find safe, adequate, affordable housing in their community.

9) Extend hotel shelter stays for displaced people to 1 month minimum

a. Categorizing the level and urgency of displacement is a double-edged sword. We would not recommend but that can be looked at to determine level of urgency if returning soon to former home, or long-term displaced scenario, immigration status, age, medical condition, etc.

b. IE: 550 tenants from 89th Street TA were displaced with near total loss in 4/2021 having to fight for multiple hotel extensions, securing an indefinite period in hotel shelters for those that chose to stay until the buildings were repaired and reopened. This was the first time the City, under DeBlasio, did this until Hurricane Ida in 9/2021, which was then declared a FEMA disaster zone. See <https://jacksonheightspost.com/de-blasio-extends-hotel-stays-for-jackson-heights-tenants-left-homeless-following-fire#:~:text=Temporary%20hotel%20stays%20were%20initially%20provided%20by,accompanied%20by%20elected%20officials%20held%20a%20rally>

d. The last time the City was known to extend hotel shelter stays occurred with several dozens of homeowners in South Ozone Park, Queens displaced due to a major sewer break around Thanksgiving 2019 - <https://www.nycbar.org/reports/recommendations-to-improve-the-claims-process-learning-from-the-south-ozone-park-sewer-damage-situation/>

Amina Watson

April 6, 2025

Finding Myself after Loss

2910 Wallace Ave Testimony

When I said a prayer for the new year on December 31, 2024, I never knew that it would lead to the experience that my family and I, and our neighbors, faced on January 10, 2025. I began praying for new beginnings and ways to make our living situation better, as we dealt with changes within our building. I used to say that I would never leave our apartment. It was my only home, and unlike most of my friends, I had never moved before. But the truth is, over the last few years I began to feel unsafe in my sanctuary. Our building began to deteriorate under new management, even affecting our apartment, and our neighborhood began to change. My family and I had had enough. I asked God to work miracles — for our family and neighbors. We never imagined this would be the path, but I believe God works in ways we don't yet understand, until we get to see the unseen. When the everything falls out from beneath us, He always puts our feet back on solid ground.

On January 7th, my mom and I were on a video call where she showed me that she'd erased our chalkboard walls, writing "Welcome 2025, New Year, New Beginnings". I was upset with her because the walls were adorned with messages written by loved ones who came to visit, some messages being at least a decade old. We had no idea that we'd soon experience a far more complete erasure — of our entire

home. It was eerie to watch our building — a place so familiar, where delivery drivers came daily and neighbors visited each other for weekend hangouts — become suddenly inaccessible. We spent every day afterward there, helping neighbors retrieve what they could, before everything else they owned was thrown away. I'm endlessly grateful to the fire investigators and contractors, whom we worked with as we facilitated the item retrieval process. They even helped my family and I recover a few sentiments, including our late cousin's ashes. I watched neighbors reunite with keepsakes and belongings with sentimental value, and while I couldn't do the same, I found joy in seeing them find even the smallest pieces of home again.

Sometimes I feel silly for how deeply I mourn my belongings. As someone diagnosed with autism, my things are my comfort. I always said I wouldn't get rid of them and looked forward to passing them down to my future children, where we'd look back on the photos, childhood items, and even schoolwork that my mother kept over the years. In the aftermath of the fire, I found myself in a state of numbness. I was having panic attacks, struggling to remember even the simplest of items I owned, and relying heavily on photos just to piece together memories. A wave of sadness was brought over me. My attachments to my belongings are deeper than most could understand. I feel strongly about them due to my disability, and often beat myself up over what I should have done to save them. They, along with our apartment, represented stability and identity. All of my 23 years of life were spent living in Apt. 4F, and the most important milestones that have shaped me into who I am today were experienced there. I feel like I have lost pieces of myself.

But, what I've realized is that it's not just about the material items — it's about the life that I built around them. Those items and our apartment itself were part of my

sense of home. There were so many items lost from loved ones as well. Gifts, birthday cards, belongings, and handwritten letters that were given to me by my late grandmother were all burned, and the recurring reminders of those losses are gut-wrenching each time. Most people have physical reminders of late loved ones to hold onto, but now, we don't have those either. It's painful knowing that I don't have anything from a loved one whom I'll never see again in this lifetime. I lost my grandmother around a young age, and I do not have but one memory of her. Even that memory is distorted, and I relied on imagery to form a sense of recollection. I've always been someone who wishes they could go back and relive certain memories, or redo mistakes. But more than anything in my life, this is the one moment I wish I could undo. To go back in time and at least prevent the extent of loss if I couldn't stop the fire from happening.

When I received the Citizen App notification that there was a fire in our building, before hearing my neighbors in the hallway say that the fire was in their apartment, I truly believed we'd be coming back to our homes. I remember comforting my neighbor, Cynthia, a.k.a, "Nikki", as we walked down the stairs. She was shocked to see firefighters breaking down her walls to fight the flames. I told her that she was safe and that's what mattered. I told her that there'd be damage in her apartment, but that it would be fixed. I thought that for at most a few days, we'd have to stay at a relative's house until we were able to go back to our apartment. This is why I took my work laptop over my personal, and didn't think to take any other valuables. I trusted that they'd remain safe and in tact. The grief is bewildering. Shock lasts for a long time, and when realization settles in, the pain is intense. There were moments when I had to hide at work to cry, struggling to stay composed while my world was unraveling inside.

My family and I haven't settled into a new place yet. People ask if we've done so, but we're nowhere near "settled". We've been displaced, and the uncertainty is destabilizing. All of my journals and video diaries, keepsakes and photos — everything that made up the home I've always known — gone. I don't recognize myself anymore, and I can't wait for the reason for not recognizing myself anymore to be because I've transformed into a stronger being.

I always feel deeply for others when I hear about tragedies like fires and other natural disasters. Now my neighbors and our family know how it feels to be in those shoes. Everyone responds differently to grief. Some neighbors, including my sister, get flashbacks when they hear firetrucks. I panic when I hear fire alarms, and this was my experience recently at work. A fire alarm went off in my office, and becoming triggered, I had to excuse myself from an important client call. I rushed outside and broke down once I called my mom. It hit that hard. Some of us now live minimally, afraid to get attached to anything in case we have to leave it behind again. Others have found themselves hoarding or rushing to replace what they've lost. These are all trauma responses and the need to feel a sense of control. Picking up the pieces is hard when you know your roots and origin don't run as deep anymore, but when uprooted, there is the ability to be planted again.

Returning to work and seeing my family reminded me there's still a world outside of this tragedy. I want to continue living without digging myself deeper into sadness. I've learned. I've grown, and I've become more aware, more vocal, more of an advocate. Despite the cost and pain of replacing basic needs, I've learned resilience. I even got promoted at work — a reminder that my strength and effort haven't gone unnoticed.

Let me be clear: this tragedy didn't have to happen. We need change. We need legislation that holds landlords accountable — not just fines, but bans on owning or managing property, should they continue their negligence. HPD needs more thorough investigations when complaints are filed, regardless of tenant availability at the time. Tenants must be kept informed about the conditions of their homes — not left in the dark. We've made a choice — negligence ends with us. We're fighting harder, pushing for accountability and transparency, and working so that no other tenant goes unheard. There were beautiful moments amidst the heartbreak — connecting with our community, partnering with aid organizations, seeing the ripple effects of our advocacy. The voices of 2910 Wallace Ave will not be silenced. We will be heard, because the change we're building will outlive this terrible experience, while helping future NYC residents. New beginnings, 2025.

Testimony of Kathleen Midlaw

Resident of [REDACTED],

Glendale, NY 11385

In November 2024, I was displaced for the second time from my long term rent stabilized apartment located in Glendale, NY.

My displacement has caused depression, anxiety and anger. The only reason that my neighbors and I were able to evacuate was because one neighbor returned home from work early and was able to coordinate a safe and efficient evacuation.

Meaningful repairs must be made. The vacate orders have remained in effect for months while the owner of my building has not taken any steps to make meaningful repairs. The building continues to have fire damage and lack essential services like heat, hot water, gas, and electricity. I fear that it will take years for me to be able to move back into my apartment.

More temporary residences need to be built. Currently, I am staying with friends, but not all of my neighbors are as lucky. Some are required to use the city's shelter system. As there is limited shelter space, particularly in Queens, my neighbors are living far away from work and school. Further, because of the living conditions, many feel unsafe.

The most frustrating aspect of this experience is that this fire was preventable had the Fire Department of the City of New York, the Department of Buildings, and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development adequately responded to complaints filed by me and my neighbors. Previously, in 2018, a similar fire occurred as a result of excessive amounts of garbage in the basement. After I was able to re-enter and resume living in my apartment, I continued to make complaints because nothing had changed. FDNY, DOB, and HPD were well aware of the issues with my building and allowed violations to continue, resulting in my current displacement.

[REDACTED]
Bronx, New York, 10461
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

4/02/2025

Dear To Whom This May Concern,

I am writing to formally demand accountability for the devastating fire that occurred on January 10 at 2910 Wallace Ave, which left me and my two children homeless. This fire was the direct result of my landlord's repeated negligence, despite my numerous complaints about the unsafe conditions in my apartment.

For months before the fire, I reached out multiple times to report serious issues, including the lack of heat, chipping paint, holes in the walls, and other hazards that made my home unsafe. I was pregnant at the time and repeatedly pleaded for necessary repairs, but my concerns were ignored. By the time the fire happened, I had just given birth to my newborn baby and was also caring for my 11-year-old child. Instead of having a safe home for my family, I lost everything due to my landlord's complete disregard for tenant safety.

Without heat, my neighbors and I had no choice but to seek alternative ways to stay warm. This entirely preventable situation led to the fire that destroyed my home and belongings, forcing me and my children into a situation of extreme hardship. The emotional, financial, and physical toll of this loss is immeasurable.

It is unacceptable that my landlord's negligence has resulted in the destruction of my home and the suffering of my family. I am demanding immediate action, including financial compensation, relocation assistance, legal action against the landlord. I also urge to enforce stricter regulations to prevent landlords from putting tenants especially families with children at such risk in the future.

I expect a prompt response regarding the steps that will be taken to address this situation. I will not allow my family's suffering to be ignored.

Sincerely

Marcia Feliz

April 2, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Michael Hawley and I am a tenant who experienced being displaced and without a home my building on East 14th Street in Manhattan was issued an emergency vacate order in late November, 2023. This occurred after my landlord refused to repair the structural integrity of my building, despite knowing for years that it needed to be done. A law like Intro 0749-2024, which would create an office of residential displacement remediation and establish a residential displacement remediation online portal, would have been of great benefit and assistance to me and my neighbors during our time of strife and not knowing where to turn. What we have experienced, no other tenants should suffer, and such an office would be an immediate resource to tenants who suddenly don't know where to live. I hope that this law can be passed.

Sincerely,

Michael Hawley

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Michael Hawley.

New York, NY 10009

I am Miguel Jimenez from Apt ##, one of the families affected by that 5-alarm fire that transpired on Jan 10, 2025.

I may be one of the many families in that building that has dogs, and dogs are not animals, they are my family's babies, they are part of our lives; and because of the dogs, I was not given a chance by HPD to be in the system because I was not willing to give up my dogs and because of what was already a very traumatic event in our lives, I stopped hoping to be helped by the same city that me and my wife worked for. I am a retired City worker and my wife is currently working in a city hospital for years who even endured and worked during the height of the COVID pandemic, day in and day out sacrificing herself to help others during a very dark moment that the entire world has experienced.

We all need help as we all lost everything because of the fire.

I just hope that one or some of our lawmakers will be able to pass a bill that will create another provision, that when a disaster happens that there will be a provision for families with pets to be accommodated and be treated as well as when families with children or elders are involved. Pets are not able to verbalize trauma and pain but it does not mean that they are not traumatized, because they are.

Thank you so much.

Hello, my name is Nicolet Seymour. I'm typing this testimony on behalf of my parents; Glenford, & Pearline. My daughter; Cassandra & our two fur babies; Bayree (Bear) & Milo. January 10, 2025 was one the worst moments of our lives. Our apartment building on 2910 Wallace was engulfed in flames around 2 am. I felt helpless watching our building burn and there's absolutely nothing you can do about it. But to be honest the nightmare began way before that day. The lights/ power in our apartment went out several times and we were left in the darkness wondering why. We called the super and were told that there are electrical issues with the building and it would soon be fixed. Little did we all know, no repairs were getting done and this would eventually lead to the fire on the night of the 10th.

When landlord's treat their tenants as dollar signs and not as human beings that's a huge problem. The building has been steadily declining every since this owner, Ved Parkash took over some years ago. How is he ranked one of the worst landlords in the city and still able to own buildings? Who is overseeing the conditions of the buildings and the needs of the tenants? I have so many questions and absolutely no one seems to have any answers.

My 3- year-old daughter, My Parents over the ages of 65, myself and our dogs all had to leave the home and community we've know for over 2 decades. This is the only home my daughter and doggies have know. It's heartbreaking to know that we are currently displaced from our fellow neighbors who we've come to view as family. We are currently split up, I'm staying with my Aunty, her apartment is closer to my job as I am currently the only one working in my family. The rest of my family is living in a hotel. We've been fervently looking for a place to live, but to no avail. I'm asking that 2910 Wallace Ave be given justice, apartments, houses, vouchers, and everything else that we are requiring. I want to thank those who have been there for us from the beginning and have stood in the gap for us all, they all know who they are. We appreciate you from the bottom of our hearts. I want to implore my fellow tenants to stay the course, and don't give up the fight. We have a long journey ahead, but as long as we lean on, and stick with each other, we will be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I'd like to end my testimony here, because I know time is a factor. Thank you for your time, God bless.

Testimony Before City Hall – Housing and Building Hearing

By: Ricardine Verdiner Bernard

April 2nd, 2025

My name is Ricardine Bernard, I am a tenant leader and have lived at [REDACTED] Wallace ave. since I was 7 years old. I am currently 39 years of age which means I have been living there for 32 years. Let me start off by saying there aren't enough words in my lexicon to express what my family and I experienced. Since January 10th 2025, our lives have been upside down. The need of support and comfort has been something we have been searching for... yet, it is nowhere to be found. It is absent. We are lost. We are hurt. We are angry. Nonetheless we are confused. Confused about what has been bestowed on us.

During the weeks of the fire, I've learned a harsh reality, that there is no real support for the working class. My husband and I work so hard to provide for our family but because we make a certain amount we don't qualify for many assistance programs. Although, we are in a family living center we are still homeless. We are struggling and the system has no safety net for people like us. It appears that fire victims fall through the cracks of bureaucracy.

To be honest, the building was in horrible condition for years. There were multiple complaints about the faulty wiring, heating systems, ceilings caving in and water leaks from the ceilings and the walls. We begged for repairs, but we were ignored. We called 311, they would contact HPD about recurring issues and still nothing. Nothing would happen because our landlord would receive the violations and ignore them time after time without facing any consequences. How does this happen? Where is the accountability? What are the preventative measures when a disaster like this happens?

Slumlords are notorious for intentional negligence, and they get away with murder. This is the only business that you can get rewarded for providing poor service. We are being punished for simply working hard, while the man responsible for our suffering walks away with no remorse or consequences. Does it take a loss of life before there are repercussions for their negligence?

We urge the city to act against slumlords before lives are lost and I am proposing the following:

- Unannounced, mandatory safety inspections of all rental properties owned by landlords with prior violations. (No more allowing them to cover up the problems before inspection)
- An immediate seize of properties owned by slumlords who repeatedly neglect complaints and inhabitable conditions. (Homes should be placed under responsible ownership not to those who profits from human suffering)
- A tenant ownership program that allows residents to take control of abandoned or neglected buildings. (If landlord refuses to maintain a property, tenants should have the first right to take over as a cooperative, with city support)
- Criminal charges for slumlords whose negligence leads to fires, collapses, or other disasters. (If their actions or in actions kill tenants, they should be held accountable)
- Emergency housing assistance for working class families displaced by slumlord negligence. (Families should not be left to suffer just because they work and pay taxes)

Slumlords like Parkash has a history of violations and will continue to ruin lives if the city allows them to do so. They will continue to take and take while working class tenants are forced into shelters and family living centers. My son asks my husband and I every night when we're going home, and we have no answers for him. He has moments when he cries himself to sleep because he says it isn't comfy enough. Leaving us feeling hopeless and helpless with no clear sight on what's to come.

Right now, tenants are losing their homes while slumlords are getting richer. We cannot wait any longer! This fire wasn't just a tragedy, it was preventable! Unfortunately, this is a result of a slumlord's greed and negligence. We aren't asking for handouts we are simply asking for justice. Safe housing is a basic right, not a privilege reserved for the wealthy. This council and the city has the power to protect families like mine from suffering like this again. The big question is: Will You?

Thank you,

Ricardine Bernard.

Testimony Before City Hall – Housing and Building Committee Hearing

By: Ricardine Verdiner Bernard

April 3rd, 2025

My name is Ricardine Verdiner Bernard, I am a tenant leader and a resident of [REDACTED] Wallace Avenue. I first moved into the building when I was 7 years old and have been living there for 32 years. Let me start off by saying there isn't enough time or words in my lexicon to express what my family and I experienced on January 10th and since that day. Our lives have been set upside down. The need of support and comfort has been something we have been searching for and yet, it is nowhere to be found. It is absent. We are lost. We are hurt. We are angry. Nonetheless, we are confused. Confused, about what has been bestowed upon us.

During the weeks following the fire, I learned a harsh reality, that there is no real support for the working class. My husband and I work so hard to provide for our family but because we make a certain amount, we don't qualify for many assistance programs. Although, we are in a family living center we are still homeless. We are struggling and the system has no safety net for people like us. It appears that fire victims fall through the cracks of bureaucracy.

To be honest, the building was in horrible condition for years. There were multiple complaints about the faulty wiring, heating systems, ceilings caving in and water leaks from the ceilings and the walls. We begged for repairs, but we were ignored. We called 311, they would contact HPD about recurring issues and still nothing. Nothing would happen because our landlord would receive the violations and ignore them time after time without facing any consequences. How does this happen? Where is the accountability? What are the preventative measures when a disaster like this happens?

Slumlords are notorious for intentional negligence, and they get away with it. This is the only business that you can get rewarded for providing poor service. We are being punished for simply working hard, while the man responsible for our suffering walks away with no consequences. Does it take a loss of life before there are repercussions for their negligence?

We urge the city to act against slumlords before lives are lost and I am proposing the following:

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- Emergency housing assistance for working class families displaced by slumlord negligence. (Families should not be left to suffer just because they work and pay taxes)

Behind each apartment lost there is an untold story. One tenant, a pregnant mother of two young girls, is trying to hold it together while searching for stable housing. She worries about their mental health and fears for their future because it's the only home her daughters know. There have been days where they have called out of school and work because it's been too much for them to bare. Another tenant is facing the impossible decision to part ways with her pets, because shelters often won't accept animals.

She now has to choose between safety and staying with the only source of comfort she has left. Our elderly residents are overwhelmed by this disaster and the lack of immediate support, caused them to make the heartbreaking decision to leave the state entirely. Not because they want to, but because they feel they have no choice. We have lost our homes, our possessions, and our sense of security. Our families are displaced, traumatized, exhausted and struggling to survive each day.

In the wake of this devastation, Governor Hochul's proposal to apply for small business loans has been presented as a resource. While it may be well-intentioned, let's be very clear that this is not a realistic option for fire victims. These are loans, not grants and we need grants, not debt! Many of us aren't business owners and we cannot afford to take on additional debt after losing everything. This would add to our burden instead of easing it. We need immediate, no strings attached relief, not another layer of hardship. We are calling on the city and state to prioritize emergency relief funding specifically for disaster victims, such as:

- Guaranteed emergency and permanent housing options, that include accommodations for pets and families
- Direct financial assistance to replace essentials lost in the fire
- Support for mental health and trauma recovery
- Accessible programs specifically tailored to displaced tenants, not just general loan offers
- A coordinated, compassionate emergency response that prioritizes people over paperwork
- Disaster relief fund

I want to acknowledge and express my sincere appreciation to Council Members Kevin Riley & Pierina Sanchez who have put forward legislation and bills aimed to support fire victims. Both have demonstrated a real commitment to advocating for fire victims through the introduction of legislation. We see their efforts and are truly grateful for their leadership and compassion. Their efforts show a commitment to long-term recovery and rebuilding, and I am forever grateful for their support and hard work. Although, these initiatives may bring relief months or even years down the line, we are still facing homelessness and instability today. Right now, we are facing an emergency and need urgent support.

Slumlords like Parkash have a history of violations and will continue to ruin lives if the city allows them to do so. They will continue to take and take while working class tenants are forced into shelters and family living centers. My son asks my husband and I every night when we're going home, and we have no answers for him. He has moments when he cries himself to sleep because he says it isn't "comfy" enough. Leaving us feeling hopeless and helpless with no clear sight on what's to come.

Right now, tenants are losing their homes while slumlords are getting richer. We cannot wait any longer! This fire wasn't just a tragedy, it was preventable! Unfortunately, this is a result of a slumlord's greed and negligence. We aren't asking for handouts we are simply asking for justice. Safe housing is a basic right, not a privilege reserved for the wealthy. This council and the city have the power to protect families like mine from suffering like this again. The big question is: what will you do now to help us?

Thank you,

Ricardine Verdiner Bernard.

4/1/25

Good morning, everyone,

My name is Yolanda Richardson, and I lived at [REDACTED] Wallace Avenue, [REDACTED]—the top floor of the building—before losing everything in the fire that took place on January 10, 2025. I appreciate the opportunity to share my experience with you today.

Before I discuss what this experience has meant for me, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude. To the Red Cross, HPD, Gene from AIM for his unwavering advocacy, Justice for Families for opening their doors to us, Vanessa Gibson, Kevin Riley, Richie Torres, Nanette, Millicent, Zaccaro, Bronx Legal Aid, and everyone else who has offered an ear, advice, meals, and clothing throughout this journey—thank you. Your support has meant everything to me and my family in this incredibly difficult time.

Never in my life did I think I would be thrust into advocacy due to displacement from a disaster. However, I accept the hand I've been dealt. I truly believe that God placed me here to be part of a movement—to change a broken system or at least set the foundation for that change.

Initially, the reality of the fire's impact did not fully hit me. I did what I always do: I focused on helping others. In this case, it was the tenants of my building. Looking back, I realize this was my way of avoiding my own pain. It wasn't until I spoke with Alina Dowe from the Mayor's Office that I began, as she put it, "putting the mask on myself."

Before that, even the simplest tasks felt overwhelming. I couldn't walk into a store to buy basic necessities without breaking down in tears. For a month, I wore the only bra I was given on the day of the fire because I couldn't bring myself to shop for more. I had to stay strong while my children and grandchildren grieved the loss of everything they owned. My daughter, who is clinically diagnosed as highly functioning autistic with OCD and anxiety, has had an especially difficult time coping. The trauma of displacement has affected her both physically and mentally. Just recently, she suffered a panic attack at work when a fire alarm went off.

To say that losing everything is surreal would be an understatement. I may not be attached to material things, but that doesn't mean I didn't cherish them. My collection of over 30 Fedora hats, my 100 vinyl albums, my Demont Pinder painting that adorned my walls, and the clothing I had just bought—proudly telling my youngest daughter that I was going to take myself on a date—are all gone.

Honestly, I need more help than I have received. I need a Section 8 voucher that I can take anywhere. I need grants, not loans, to help me rebuild. Businesses receive grants to recover from disasters—why aren't fire victims afforded the same? I want to be placed in a newly built development or a home that accepts my Section 8 voucher, not forced into a shelter with substandard conditions. No one should be sent to a place where those making the decision wouldn't send their own family members. If you truly understood what these shelters were like, you would do better. But the truth is, it feels like you don't care.

I have worked since I was 14 years old, beginning with the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Before being laid off from my last job, I had worked there for 27 years. I have paid federal, state, and city taxes throughout my life. Yet, because I made slightly more than the threshold for low-income assistance, I don't qualify for help. What, then, are my taxes for? I have contributed to this system, and now, in my time of need, I deserve assistance. I didn't ask for this situation. With today's cost of living, I need real support—not just to secure housing, but to furnish it. My children and grandchildren need the same. They lost everything, too, even if they are now going their own way.

In conclusion, we need a better disaster plan for fire victims—especially when the disaster was no fault of their own. There should be a comprehensive guide provided on the very day of the fire: a booklet with direct links to available resources, programs, and grants specifically for fire victims. Not just loans, but real support to help us rebuild our lives. No one should have to scramble and research resources on their own while coping with the trauma of losing their home. That added stress is unnecessary and avoidable.

Thank you for your time.

April 1, 2025

Good morning, everyone,

My name is Yolanda Richardson. I lived at [REDACTED] Wallace Avenue, [REDACTED] on the top floor, where I lost everything.

Before I begin, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to each organization, politician, city official, and agency that has offered an ear, advice, meals, and clothing throughout this journey. Your support has meant the world to me; thank you.

I am grateful for this opportunity to share my concerns. I believe that God placed me here to be part of a movement—to help change a broken system or, at the very least, lay the foundation for that change.

The reality of the fire's impact has not fully sunk in. I coped the only way I knew how—by focusing on helping others. It was my way of avoiding my own pain. It wasn't until I spoke with Alina Dowe from the Mayor's Office that I truly began, as she put it, "putting the mask on myself."

This fire has devastated my family and me in unimaginable ways. Even simple tasks, like walking into a store to buy basic necessities, brought me to tears. My children and grandchildren are grieving as well. My youngest daughter, who is clinically diagnosed as highly functioning autistic with OCD, sensory disorder, and anxiety, has struggled the most. Recently, she suffered a panic attack at work when a fire alarm went off.

I have worked most of my life, paying federal, state, and city taxes. Yet, because my income was just above the threshold for low-income assistance, I don't qualify for help. So, I ask: What are my taxes for? I have contributed to this system, and now, in my time of need, I deserve assistance. I did not choose this situation.

The current plan for fire victims needs an overhaul. Assistance programs, such as vouchers, should be accessible to fire victims, especially in today's economy, because the fire was not our fault. There should be grants to help us rebuild. Businesses receive grants all the time, why not displaced families? If loans are offered, they should be truly accessible.

And when a fire is caused by landlord negligence, hold them held accountable. Fines are not enough. They should cover the cost of displaced tenants' housing. Take their assets if necessary. Make them pay for the consequences of their inaction.

There is so much more to be done. Let's put our heads together and build a better system—one that works for ALL of us.

Thank you for your time.

April 3, 2025

Good morning, everyone,

My name is Yolanda Richardson, a tenant association leader, who lived at [REDACTED] Wallace Avenue, on the top floor, 25 years, with my children and grandchildren and lost everything in the devastating fire on January 10th, 2025, to our building.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns. Before I begin, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has extended themselves to us throughout this journey, by saying; thank you.

God placed me here to be part of a movement, to help change a broken system or, at the very least, lay the foundation for that change.

The fire's impact has not fully sunk in. I'm coping the only way I know how, by helping others. It's my way of avoiding my own pain. It wasn't until I spoke with Alina Dowe from the Mayor's Office that I truly began, as she put it, "putting the mask on myself."

This fire has devastated my family and me in unimaginable ways. Our memories are gone and cannot be replaced. It's the only home my youngest daughter and grandchildren knew. The simplest tasks, like walking into a store to buy bare necessities, brought me to tears. One of my daughters, who is clinically diagnosed as highly functioning autistic with OCD, sensory disorder, and anxiety, has struggled the most. Recently, she suffered a panic attack at work when a fire alarm went off.

I've paid federal, state, and city taxes most of my life. Yet, because my income was just above the threshold for low-income assistance, I don't qualify for help. So, I ask: What are my taxes for? I did not choose this situation, and we need!

Assistance programs, such as vouchers, should be readily accessible to fire victims, especially in today's economy, specifically when it isn't the fault of the victim. There should be grants to help us rebuild. Businesses receive grants all the time, why not displaced families? When a fire is caused by landlord negligence, truly hold them accountable. Make them cover the cost of displaced tenants' housing. Take away their assets away. Make them pay for the consequences of their inaction.

There is so much more to be done. Let's put our heads together and build a better system—one that works for ALL of us.

Thank you for your time.

4/6/25

Good morning,

My name is Yolanda Richardson, a Tenant Association Leader at [REDACTED] Wallace Avenue, [REDACTED]. I lived here for 25 years—on the top floor—with my children and grandchildren. On January 10, 2025, our lives were forever changed. We lost everything in a devastating fire.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak at the April 3rd hearing. I also want to extend my deepest gratitude to those who have stood by us. The care my family and I have received has been humbling, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Never in my life did I think I would be thrust into advocacy due to being displaced by a disaster. But I believe God placed me here for a reason—to be a part of a movement that demands real change in a broken system.

Originally, my testimony was centered on what my family needs during this time of displacement. But after hearing from the Fire Department, HPD, and the Department of Buildings (DOB) at the hearing, I knew I had to revise my remarks. The way these agencies used the fire at 2910 Wallace as an example of their response was frustrating—and in many ways, inaccurate.

Let's be clear:

- It took the Fire Department over 16 hours to fully put out the fire.
- Frank from DOB and his team came on the third day—alongside the landlord's legal team—and we never saw them again.
- On the very day of the fire, tenant leaders like RiCardine and I started organizing. We created a WhatsApp group that allowed us to communicate, plan, and support each other. My youngest child helped manage it. We built a tenant list, scheduled times for people to retrieve belongings, and collaborated with Super Danny.
- When Fire Investigators Marc, Tony, and Lou arrived on Day 4, they worked with us, assisting the tenants to retrieve their items from the building. They praised our organization and relied on the structure we created. That was true collaboration, not something the Fire Department can claim full credit for.

As for HPD—where do I begin?

Deputy Commissioner Santiago's response on April 3rd echoed what we heard at our January 24th town hall: vague, polished answers that didn't match our experience. HPD described all kinds of help, but I've never seen them at the Residence Inn where my family was placed for nearly two months. Red Cross managed our housing initially. I didn't speak with them until six days after the fire—and only because I scheduled it myself.

I wasn't guided through any process. I didn't know what the HPD portal was. I didn't even know I had a caseworker until I was moved out of the hotel. He promised to check in every two weeks. I haven't heard from him since March 20th.

HPD mentioned a vacate order. If it hadn't been taped to the door of the building, I wouldn't have known it existed. Where is the comprehensive guide for fire victims? How are we supposed to navigate this system while grieving and rebuilding?

The truth is, I'm lost. I know I must find a new home—but where can I afford to live after losing a rent-stabilized apartment? What options are there for families like mine?

This experience has left emotional scars. For weeks, even going to the store was overwhelming. I cried while buying bare necessities. For a month, I wore the only bra I had from the day of the fire. I had to be the strong one for my family, but I was breaking inside.

The only way I know how to cope is by helping others. It wasn't until I spoke with Alina Dowe from the Mayor's Office that I began—as she said, “putting the mask on myself.” That I began to focus on helping my own family, but I still need more help.

My daughter, who is highly functioning autistic with OCD, a sensory disorder, and anxiety, suffered a panic attack at work recently when a fire alarm went off. We are still living with the trauma every day.

I need a **Section 8 voucher** that I can use anywhere.

I need **grants**—not loans—to rebuild.

Businesses receive disaster recovery funds—why not fire victims?

I need housing that's **safe, stable, and dignified**—not substandard shelter placements.

I've worked since I was 14 years old, starting with the Summer Youth Employment Program. I spent 27 years at my last job before being laid off. I've paid federal, state, and city taxes faithfully. Now, in my time of need, I deserve assistance. I didn't ask for this disaster. I've contributed to this system—why isn't the system here for me?

I need real support—not just to find housing, but to make it livable. So do my children and grandchildren. Their loss was just as great.

We need to do more, for every displaced person. Programs like Section 8 vouchers should be **automatically accessible to fire victims**, especially when they are not at fault. We need **grants to rebuild**, and we need to hold **landlords accountable**. When their negligence causes harm, they should bear the costs, period. Take their assets. Make them pay for what they've done.

Let's put our heads together and build a better system—one that truly works for all of us. No one should have to piece together resources while grieving and displaced. That added stress is cruel and unnecessary.

Thank you for your time.

I tend to introduce myself as an Educator, an Advocate and a Poet. I am a 22 year educator, having served in NYC public schools as a teacher, literacy coach, assistant principal and educational consultant across multiple Bronx school districts. I am an advocate for equity in education, specifically engaging in hands-on work and initiatives that support my students having access to quality learning experiences, resources and empowered, capable teachers. I am a poet, a writer, focusing on highlighting the charms, the misconceptions and the true beauty of my culture, of my borough, of My Bronx. And, as of January 10th, 2025, you can now also add the noun "Displaced" to my introduction. I lost my home and everything in it in the blink of an eye in the wee hours of that frigid January night. I sat in the cold for over 2 hours watching the place I've called home for over 15 years go up in flames, and there was nothing I could do about it.

As a Bronx-native, as a Nuyorican, my roots run deep here. My family's ties to The Bronx go as far back as the early 70's. I learned the importance and satisfaction of hard work, commitment and perseverance through my parents' and extended family's sacrifices. They left their homeland to come to New York to get better access to quality employment, housing, healthcare, education - the basic necessities that any person needs and wants for themselves and their family. The basic needs that one would think are readily accessible to all of us New Yorkers, us citizens. My family migrated here because they wanted better. And they did earn that for themselves through the tireless work they put in. But, in what they gained, they gave that much back in return. Feeding into our Bronx with their labor, their culture, their economic contributions, their immersion into the community. They made The Bronx their new home. They instilled that love and respect of my borough in me. I made a conscious effort years ago to root myself and my efforts within my community - to serve positively to the community that has nurtured and served me. That is why, regardless of the roles I've taken on within my career, I have always ensured that whatever I was doing was benefitting my borough, my people in some way.

Oftentimes, when We - persons of Black & Latinx descent - achieve a certain level of academic and/or economic success, it is automatically assumed, even expected, that We should pack our bags and leave. Move to "greener pastures". To a "better neighborhood". I've been asked many times - Why am I still here? I am still in The Bronx because it is my home. It is the only home I know. I have continued interest in helping my borough and community flourish and thrive. And I am not letting anyone oust me out of my home.

The fire at 2910 Wallace Avenue was a direct result of negligence. There's no denial of that. And the response and reaction - or lack thereof - of the management to over 250 people finding themselves literally homeless within a matter of hours, demonstrates the lack of connection and care to our borough and its people. We're seen as easily disposable. We're not important enough to be cared for. The fact that it's been 3 months and I still don't have a home of my own, having to stay with family and friends. The fact that HPD told me if I didn't take them up on their HPD shelter when it was offered 2 weeks after the fire, that that meant that I wouldn't be able to come back and seek assistance at a later date. All of this shows the disconnect and the disrespect for us Bronxites. It reflects the fact that We are looked at as not worthy of the basic

rights that all human beings should have - that of safe shelter, of efficient healthcare, of viable employment, of access to quality education.

I don't think anyone really understands the impact that losing your home has on one's emotional well-being and psyche. It is a trauma and violation that is violent and persists. It resurfaces in the flashbacks from that night. It resurfaces in the anxiety that bubbles up from being uncertain as to your ability to sustain, to care for yourself and your family. It resurfaces in the biases and blatant racism you face when you're trying to find a new apartment and seeking support, but those systems that are supposed to be in place to help are instead passing you off as another number - letting you linger in waiting, or not even acknowledging your struggle at all.

This can't be the way our city responds to its citizens' needs. Regardless of culture, class, economic status, etc., We are people. Citizens who contribute to the success and vibrancy of our city every single day within the diverse roles we play. The city needs to have efficient measures in place to help all its citizens when emergencies as such strike. And, moreover, to have solid and consistent consequences and penalties in place for landlords who don't value and respect their tenants' safety.

**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: Guillermo Pardo

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Policy & Legal Affairs

I represent: Treasury & Buildings

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: Marcus Jackson

Address: _____

I represent: Encore Community Services

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: Asher Wilhelm

Address: _____

I represent: _____

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: 4/3/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JESSICA BELLINDER

Address: [REDACTED] 10451

I represent: THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Address: 49 Thomas Street, 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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lacey Tauber

Address: _____

I represent: BK Borough President Antonio Reynoso

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: April 3rd, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Recardine Vardine Bernard

Address: _____

I represent: _____

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. 749 Res. No. 307

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 4/3/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gabriel Fawcett

Address: _____

I represent: Churches United for Fair Housing

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: 4/3/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melanda Richardson

Address: _____ BX NY 10467

I represent: Tenants of 2910 Wallaw Ave as

Address: Tenant Association Lead

**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: Vanessa Perkins

Address: _____ BX NY

I represent: tenants of 2910 Wallace with Tenant

Address: _____ Associa. BX

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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kelly Rolon

Address: 2910 Wallace Ave, BX NY 10467

I represent: Tenant Association

Address: 2910 Wallace Ave, BX 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: 4/3/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Monica Merceda

Address: 120-46 Queens Blvd

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: 49 Thomas St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. C262-

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Colanau

Address: [Redacted], Sunnyside NY

I represent: tenants at 4309 47th Ave

Address: [Redacted], Sunnyside NY

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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ann Marie Santiago

Address: _____

I represent: +IPD

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: Yong Ju Kim

Address: _____

I represent: +IPD

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: Frank McCauley

Address: _____

I represent: DOB

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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JAMPII ISIDOR

Address: Assistant Commissioner, Admin. Policy & Enforcement

I represent: Department of Buildings

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: Xguel Shamish

Address: _____

I represent: NYC DOR

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: John [redacted] Esposito

Address: _____

I represent: EDNY

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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yong Ju Kim

Address: 100 Gold Street NY, NY

I represent: _____

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: 9/3/21

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: Self

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: April 3, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown

Address: _____

I represent: Rose of Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street 3F

Bklyn NY 11238
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms