

August 13, 2010

The Honorable Christine C. Quinn  
New York City Council  
250 Broadway, Suite 1856  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Quinn,

The Supportive Housing Network of New York strongly urges you to co-sponsor Intro. 172, a bill to repeal Local Law 41 from 2009, which imposed fire inspection fees on nonprofit organizations that own their buildings.

The Supportive Housing Network represents over 190 nonprofit organizations that develop and operate supportive housing across New York State. Supportive housing is permanent, affordable housing for formerly homeless individuals that provides on-site targeted services. It has repeatedly been proven to be the most cost-effective solution to chronic homelessness. The Network's members operate over 250 buildings in New York City.

The nonprofit providers of supportive housing have faced numerous budget cuts from every level of government, which have led to layoffs and reductions in service. The success of supportive housing—which has saved the City money by reducing the use of shelters and other expensive emergency service interventions—relies on individualized services and case management. With each additional budget cut or fee that is imposed, the ability of our member organizations to provide these necessary services diminishes.

From organizations that own one small supportive housing program to those that operate a number of large buildings, fire inspection fees represent a significant cost. Government contracts that fund supportive housing often include very little or no funding for administrative and overhead costs, so new fire inspection fees have reduced funding available for crucial in-house services. Organizations have already begun cutting services and staff in response to Federal, State, and City budget cuts. We cannot afford to cut programs even further.

In these difficult economic times, we understand that budgets are tight, but the additional revenue raised by fire inspection fees on supportive housing's nonprofit providers only reduces vulnerable New Yorkers' access to essential services that save taxpayer dollars elsewhere in the budget. We hope you will support Intro. 172.

Sincerely,



Ted Houghton  
Executive Director