

FOR THE RECORD

Testimony of Maria Velez

NYC, City Hall, 03-16-09

Good Afternoon,

I want to sincerely thank your honorable council for the opportunity to give my testimony.

My name is Maria Vélez, I represent Make the Road New York and the Coalition of Queens Vantage Tenants. I live with my children for the past 12 years in the 34-09 of 83rd Street in Jackson Heights.

Since 2006, Vantage has bought 80 buildings in Queens and has led many residents to the Court without any reason and as part of their successful harassment, 25% of tenants have left their apartments to be rented at higher prices.

I am one of many tenants harassed by the company. Although I paid my rent punctually, they took me to court a year ago claiming that they did not receive the payment of rent. I'm still in court, but I am not alone, I now have access to lawyers from Legal Aid (Legal Aid) and I am getting the company to make the necessary repairs to my apartment as well as learning about my rights as a tenant, to avoid illegal increases in my rent. I am also organized, and as part of the victory, we got the company Vantage to resign a superintendent.

I am a disabled person and I have a special needs child. I have a limited income. My rent is about \$ 1200 and if there is no legal a reasonable rent control, this would go up too much and I would be in danger of losing my house. My income is small, and is just enough for my rent and food.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our political representatives, we can not lose any more rent stabilized units. As part of your constituents we request that you travel with us to Albany to support the repeal of the law allowing the deregulation of rents. (Vacancy Decontrol)

Thank You