



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 245

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature and Governor to enact legislation that would reverse the potential 20% increases that are allowed each time an apartment becomes vacant and would repeal the decontrol of units that reach \$2000 per month in rent.

By Council Members Quinn, Moskowitz, Nelson, Perkins, Lopez, Reed, Brewer, Foster, Gerson, Jackson, Katz, Reyna, Rivera, Sanders and Serrano; also Council Member Clarke

Whereas, A real housing crisis exists in New York City, with vacancy rates below 5% year after year, and skyrocketing rents for tenants of all income levels in all five boroughs; and

Whereas, In response to this housing crisis, New York City and New York State have enacted rent control and rent stabilization laws which are in place to stabilize neighborhoods and to protect tenants from harassment and unreasonable rent increases or evictions; and

Whereas, Because of the "Urstadt Law", a relic of 1971 vacancy decontrol measures which prohibits New York City from enacting or expanding certain rent protections without the concurrence of New York State, a significant portion of the renewing and amending of New York City's rent laws takes place in Albany, rather than in local government; and

Whereas, In 1997, when renewing the rent laws, the New York State Legislature and Governor enacted two provisions in particular that have exacerbated the lack of affordable housing units in New York City, including allowing for up to 20% vacancy increases each time an apartment becomes vacant, and decontrol of units that rent for \$2000 or more per month either upon vacancy or when tenants have incomes that exceed \$175,000 for two consecutive years; and

Whereas, The potential 20% vacancy allowance each time a unit becomes vacant, which is permitted in addition to annual rent and other increases, has led to widespread reports of tenant harassment by landlords who seek to turn over units in order to receive this large increase in rent, subsequently leading to the loss of affordable units and the destabilization of neighborhoods in all of the five boroughs; and

Whereas, The deregulation of vacant apartments that reach \$2000 per month has also led to increased reports of harassment and intimidation as landlords look to decontrol units by turning over tenants in order to attain this level of rent, thereby leading to an even tighter housing market as units are deregulated and the pressure of high rents displaces lower- and middle- income tenants, especially in the wake of drastic increases in asking rents in all five boroughs, not only Manhattan; and

Whereas, The elimination of regulations on apartments where individual tenants have "luxury" incomes eliminates forever this much needed resource; and

Whereas, In a democracy, when legislation or policies enacted by government are demonstrated to have an adverse impact on the quality of life and stability of neighborhoods, it is the obligation of lawmakers to step in and remedy those laws; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, The Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature and Governor to enact legislation that would reverse the potential 20% increases that are allowed each time an apartment becomes vacant and would repeal the decontrol of units that reach \$2000 per month in rent.