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Title: Resolution calling upon the New York City Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to offer amnesty to tenants who promptly disclose under-reported income and begin paying appropriate rents.

Sponsors: Kenneth K. Fisher, Bill Perkins, Helen M. Marshall, Guillermo Linares, Jose Rivera, Margarita Lopez, Adolfo Carrion, Stephen DiBrienza, Pedro G. Espada, Kathryn E. Freed, Lloyd Henry, Karen Koslowitz, Ronnie M. Eldridge, Wendell Foster, Stanley E. Michels, Christine C. Quinn, Archie W. Spigner

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Res. No. 1466

Resolution calling upon the New York City Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to offer amnesty to tenants who promptly disclose under-reported income and begin paying appropriate rents.

By Council Members Fisher, Perkins, Marshall, Linares, Rivera, Lopez, Carrion, DiBrienza, Espada, Freed, Henry and Koslowitz; also Council Members Eldridge, Foster, Michels, Quinn and Spigner

Whereas, In response to Congressional pressure HUD initiated its first-ever nationwide crackdown on income under-reporting by comparing income reported by tenants for housing subsidies to IRS and Social Security data; and

Whereas, Federally subsidized low-income housing tenants are supposed to pay approximately 30 percent of their income in rent; and

Whereas, Approximately six thousand two hundred and fifty families that currently live in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) apartments will soon be getting letters from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, warning that they risk losing their federal rental assistance if they lied about their income; and

Whereas, In theory, those who falsely under report their income will be required to pay five years in back rent, but even HUD's overseers in Congress concede their prime goal is to make sure these tenants start paying full rent now; and

Whereas, Undoubtedly these warning letters will frighten many of the tenants who will be forced to prove that they told the truth about their income, but this fear must be balanced against the need to help those truly in need in a tight housing market when millions more need help, and ensure that those who have assets pay accordingly; and

Whereas, Proving income and having hearings to remove families from federal assistance, then moving to evict families who can then no longer pay the rent, is a financially and emotionally costly enterprise, that will be extremely distressing if it removes families who, with accurately recorded incomes, would still qualify for public housing and/or results in their civil or criminal prosecution; now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the New York City Council calls upon the New York City Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to offer amnesty to tenants who promptly disclose under reported income and begin paying appropriate rents.

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