



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: Res 0130-2004 **Version:** * **Name:** Denouncing provision of the Federal Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998

Type: Resolution **Status:** Filed

In control: Committee on Housing and Buildings

On agenda: 2/26/2004

Enactment date: **Enactment #:**

Title: Resolution denouncing the provision of the Federal Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 that requires public housing residents to perform eight hours of community service per month as a condition of continued tenancy, calling for Congress to change this provision of the law and urging the New York City Housing Authority to continue to interpret the exemptions of this provision expansively.

Sponsors: Charles Barron, Letitia James, Allan W. Jennings, Jr., Larry B. Seabrook, Robert Jackson

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Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/26/2004	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
2/26/2004	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2005	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 130

Resolution denouncing the provision of the Federal Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 that requires public housing residents to perform eight hours of community service per month as a condition of continued tenancy, calling for Congress to change this provision of the law and urging the New York City Housing Authority to continue to interpret the exemptions of this provision expansively.

By Council Members Barron, James, Jennings, Seabrook and Jackson

Whereas, The New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”), the largest public housing authority in the United States, operates over 180,000 apartments and serves approximately 174,800 families and 418,834 residents in New York City; and

Whereas, The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (“QHWRA”), passed in October 1998, significantly revised federally funded public housing policies and procedures; and

Whereas, One provision of QHWRA mandates an 8-hour monthly community service work requirement as a condition of tenancy for residents of public housing; and

Whereas, NYCHA delayed implementation of the requirement, but as of October 31, 2003, was required by law to implement it; and

Whereas, QHWRA permitted local housing authorities to exempt certain residents from the community service requirement; and

Whereas, The statute sets forth five categories for exemptions: age, disability, employment, and involvement in welfare to work or other state welfare programs; and

Whereas, NYCHA states that its policy has been to interpret these categories expansively on a case by case basis and by explicitly exempting students, pregnant women, individuals under 18 years of age, and parents without childcare in addition to the stated federal exemptions; and

Whereas, Tenants not exempt from the federally mandated requirement must perform community service as a condition of their leases and can face eviction if they do not comply; and

Whereas, Unless NYCHA interprets the statutory exemptions broadly, this provision could affect hundreds of thousands of public housing residents and pose additional hardships to families facing obstacles and disruption in their lives that already work hard, raise children and contribute to their communities; and

Whereas, Residents of public housing are the not the only persons who receive housing assistance from the federal government; and

Whereas, Homeowners who receive mortgage interest tax deductions are not required to perform community service in exchange for housing assistance; and

Whereas, Requiring public housing tenants to work for their shelter without requiring other beneficiaries of federal housing assistance to perform community service is hypocritical and discriminatory against low-income persons who live in public housing; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the city of New York denounces the provision of the Federal Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 that requires public housing residents to perform eight hours of community service per month as a condition of continued tenancy and calls for Congress to change this

provision of the law; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the city of New York urges the New York City Housing Authority to continue to interpret the exemptions of this provision expansively.

LS#411

2/23/04