Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0700-2011	**Version:**	*	**Name:**	Renew and strengthen the laws regulating rents and the eviction of tenants.
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On agenda:	3/23/2011				
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Title: Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to renew and strengthen the laws regulating rents and the eviction of tenants.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Attachments: 1. Committee Report 5/9/11, 2. Hearing Testimony 5/9/11, 3. Hearing Transcript 5/9/11, 4. Committee Report 5/26/11, 5. Hearing Transcript 5/26/11, 6. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 5-26-11

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/23/2011	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
3/23/2011	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
5/9/2011	*	Committee on Housing and Buildings	Hearing Held by Committee	
5/9/2011	*	Committee on Housing and Buildings	Laid Over by Committee	
5/26/2011	*	Committee on Housing and Buildings	Hearing Held by Committee	
5/26/2011	*	Committee on Housing and Buildings	Approved by Committee	Pass
5/26/2011	*	City Council	Approved, by Council	Pass

Res. No. 700

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to renew and strengthen the laws regulating rents and the eviction of tenants.

By Council Member Chin, the Speaker (Council Member Quinn) and Council Members Dilan, Foster, Garodnick, Brewer, Cabrera, Dickens, Dromm, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Lappin, Levin, Mark-Viverito, Mealy, Mendez, Nelson, Palma, Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Van Bramer, Vann, Williams, Gentile, Eugene, Jackson, Reyna, Rivera, Rodriguez, Weprin, Arroyo, Gennaro and Koo

Whereas, There are over one million apartments covered by rent regulations in New York City, representing roughly half of the City's rental units; and

Whereas, New York City faces a housing crisis, with a Citywide vacancy rate of only 2.88 percent, according to the 2008 Housing and Vacancy Survey; and

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Whereas, In response to a long-existing 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, The stability provided by rent regulation has helped to lessen the impacts of the severe housing shortages and market conditions in New York City; and

Whereas, Because of the "Urstadt Law", a relic of 1971 vacancy decontrol measures which prohibits New York City government from enacting more stringent protections for New York City tenants, New York City's rent laws are subject to what takes place in Albany; and

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

Whereas, The 20% vacancy allowance each time a unit becomes vacant irrespective of whether the last vacancy increase was granted, which is permitted in addition to annual "across the board" and other rent 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, thereby leading to an even tighter housing market as units are deregulated and the pressure of high rents displaces lower- and middle- income tenants thereby removing an individual and neighborhood stability; and

Whereas, The Mitchell-Lama and Project-based Section 8 programs were designed to provide stability to both individuals and neighborhoods, and allowing owners to "opt out" from these programs, without additional protections, creates the potential for destabilization and havoc, especially given the current need for affordable housing; and

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Whereas, By putting all units in Mitchell-Lama and Project-based Section 8 developments under the Rent Stabilization Program when an "opt out" occurs, apartments in Mitchell-Lama and Project-based Section 8 developments will be kept affordable following an "opt-out;" and

Whereas, Harassment by owners of their tenants became so common that the City Council and Mayor Bloomberg enacted the Tenant Protection Act of 2008, which provides an opportunity for tenants to sue their landlords in Housing Court for harassment; and

Whereas, Rent regulation both protects current tenants from being subjected to unaffordable rents and arbitrary eviction as well as helping to maintain affordability for new tenants; and

Whereas, State rent regulation and eviction protection laws will expire on June 15, 2011 unless renewed by the New York State Legislature and the Governor; and

Whereas, The New York State Legislature and the Governor should act to as soon as possible to renew the rent-regulation laws and as part of the renewal eliminate deficiencies in the regulatory structure and provide stronger protections to tenants by repealing vacancy decontrol and the "Urstadt Law," and by granting tenants in buildings in the Mitchell-Lama or project-based Section 8 programs all of the protections of rent stabilization when such buildings exit the programs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to renew and strengthen the laws regulating rents and the eviction of tenants.

LS # 2051, 2177, 2185, and 2186.
BJG
3-18-2011