



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1082-2011, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1082

Resolution calling upon the Bloomberg Administration to eliminate all forms of three-quarter housing, including referrals made by City agencies.

By Council Members James, Recchia and Rose

Whereas, According to a January 2008 Coalition for the Homeless report, “Warehousing the Homeless: The Rising Use of Illegal Boarding Houses to Shelter Homeless New Yorkers” (“the Report”), the term three-quarter housing refers to small, private residential buildings that are operated as illegal boarding houses for homeless and low-income adults; and

Whereas, According to a 2009 article in the New York Times, “Partitioned Apartments Are Risky, but Common in New York” (“the New York Times article”), in such apartments rooms are illegally converted to house multiple people in one room and such apartments are dirty, unregulated and unsafe; and

Whereas, According to the New York Times article, in 2005 a fire broke out in a partitioned apartment; because the illegal partitions in the apartment left the firefighters disoriented two firefighters jumped out a window to their deaths; and

Whereas, City housing inspectors issued 654 hazardous code violations against the 62 three-quarter houses included in the Report; violations included collapsing floors and ceilings, illegal conversions, fire safety hazards, leaks, holes in walls, broken windows, infestations of vermin, and lack of heat; and

Whereas, The Department of Buildings issued 226 violations against 47 of the houses in the Report; violations included illegal use as a homeless shelter, single room occupancy, or rooming house, and citations for maintenance insufficiencies including collapsed walls, cracked ceilings, and fire safety hazards; and

Whereas, According to advocates, three-quarter houses often misrepresent themselves as supportive

programs and force tenants to attend treatment programs even though they do not offer services and are not recognized or licensed by a government agency to provide services; and

Whereas, Additionally, tenants report that three-quarter house landlords require tenants to attend substance abuse programs even if they do not have substance abuse problems; and

Whereas, Tenants and advocates believe there is a financial relationship between landlords and the substance abuse programs they are referred to since once the treatment program concludes tenants are illegally evicted from the house; and

Whereas, Furthermore, advocates attest that most three-quarter house tenants are low-income and may be receiving public assistance, Social Security or other public benefits and landlords may receive payments directly from City and State agencies to provide housing for this population; and

Whereas, According to advocates, referrals to three-quarter houses are made from City and State agencies including, but not limited to, the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York City Human Resources Administration, the New York City Department of Homeless Services, the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, and the New York State Office of Mental Health; and

Whereas, According to the Report, landlords routinely refuse to provide leases and instead offer informal resident agreements outlining house rules, many of which violate basic tenant rights established under New York State law; and

Whereas, Therefore, illegal evictions are a common problem in three-quarter houses as tenants who complete treatment, complain about housing conditions, or do not comply with house rules are often unlawfully removed from the home; and

Whereas, Once evicted, tenants often have nowhere to turn except to return to homeless shelters and, therefore, three-quarter houses are a revolving door perpetuating homelessness; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Bloomberg Administration to

eliminate all forms of three-quarter housing, including referrals made by City agencies.

EH
LS 2672
9/14/11