



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1105-2011, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1105

Resolution urging the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would enable the spouse of someone enrolled in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE) to continue receiving SCRIE benefits when the enrolled spouse dies, and the widow/widower is within 5 years of the age requirement for receipt of SCRIE.

By Council Members Van Bramer, Chin, Dickens, Eugene, Fidler, Gentile, James, Koppell, Lander, Mendez, Recchia, Rose, Vann, Williams, Rodriguez, Dromm, Mark-Viverito and Ulrich

Whereas, The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program offers eligible tenants an exemption from rent increases; and

Whereas, New York City tenants are eligible for the SCRIE program if the tenant or his or her spouse is 62 years of age or over, they live in a rent regulated apartment, have a combined household income at or below \$29,000 per year, and are paying at least one third of their income toward their rent; and

Whereas, Additionally, owners of buildings that house SCRIE recipients receive a credit against their real estate taxes from the City of New York; and

Whereas, Currently, according to the New York City Department of Finance (DOF), more than 47,000 New York City tenants rely on the SCRIE program, which is administered by DOF; and

Whereas, In New York State the number of adults age 60 and older is projected to grow by 50 percent over the next twenty years, from 2.7 million in 2011 to 3.9 million in 2030; and

Whereas, When a tenant who is enrolled in the SCRIE program dies, the owner of the building is responsible for notifying DOF so benefits are terminated the first day of the month following the date of death; and

Whereas, A surviving household member who meets the eligibility requirements may apply for a

transfer of SCRIE benefits by simply sending a letter of request to DOF, along with a copy of the Certificate of Death, and proof of birth; and

Whereas, If the transfer of benefits is denied due to age eligibility, the widow/widower will likely be forced to either generate a significant amount of new income to continue paying the rent or seek other housing options; and

Whereas, Generating new income may be difficult because adults 55 years and older face significant challenges to finding employment; and

Whereas, By the end of 2010, 11.2 percent of those who are unemployed nationwide are people 55-64 years old, and it takes them on average 52.7 weeks to obtain employment, compared to 36.5 weeks for people under 55; and

Whereas, Even when reemployed, studies show that between 1996 and 2007, displaced men age 50 to 61 saw their median hourly wage fall 20 percent below the median wage of their former job; and

Whereas, There is a lack of affordable housing in New York City, which also makes finding a new housing option difficult; and

Whereas, It is necessary to ensure that low income New Yorkers who will soon become eligible for the SCRIE program are not displaced as a result of the death of a spouse; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would enable the spouse of someone enrolled in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE) to continue receiving SCRIE benefits when the enrolled spouse dies, and the widow/widower is within 5 years of the age requirement for receipt of SCRIE.