



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1035

Resolution calling upon the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to promulgate a rule which would increase the current public assistance shelter allowance amounts in New York City

By The Speaker (Council Member Mark-Viverito) and Council Members Chin, Levin, Rosenthal and Rodriguez

Whereas, New York City is experiencing record levels of homelessness which have not been seen since the Great Depression; and

Whereas, As of March 16, 2016, 12,184 families and 13,127 single adults were residing in the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system; and

Whereas, According to the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) three-year housing report published in 2014, thirty percent of renters are deemed “severely rent burdened” where such renters spend at least half of their household income on rent and the New York Housing Conference finds housing affordability to be a serious problem for New Yorkers; and

Whereas, Pursuant to the Regulations of the State of New York, recipients of public assistance are entitled to a maximum shelter allowance, the rate of which is determined on a county-by-county basis; and

Whereas, Pursuant to New York Social Services Law Section and the Regulations of the State of New York, eligibility for public assistance is determined when countable or net household income falls below a state established “standard of need”, and is calculated according to family size; and

Whereas, Pursuant to New York State Regulations, a single person qualifying for public assistance in New York City is entitled to a maximum shelter allowance of \$215, and a family of four is entitled to a maximum shelter allowance of \$450; and

Whereas, The New York City Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance; establishes the amount of public assistance that is divided into a shelter allowance and an amount for various remaining expenses established on a schedule based on family size; and

Whereas, HPD notes that two out of every three homes in New York City is a rental property; and

Whereas, HPD reports that the median rent in New York City rose 3.4 percent from 2011 to 2014, and the median rent with the cost utilities rose 4.3 percent in the same time; and

Whereas, Rent increases during the same period were seen citywide and the median monthly rent across all boroughs was \$1,200, an amount that can vary widely, as the median rental price in Brooklyn rose to \$2,901 and in Manhattan to \$3,299; and

Whereas, HPD reported the median income in New York City rose only 1.1 percent from 2010 to 2013, a figure not matching the rise in cost of rent; and

Whereas, The United States Census Bureau data shows that rent has risen faster than inflation over the past three years, impacting especially lower-income tenants; and

Whereas, HPD has reported that 56% of renters pay about one-third of their income on rent and utilities; and

Whereas, The current amount of shelter allowance for a single person in New York City is only \$215 a month, and the schedule of rates has not changed since 1988; and

Whereas, New York City housing advocacy group MFY Legal Services finds that the low shelter allowance grant level is “grossly inadequate for the current New York City housing market”; and

Whereas, The low shelter allowance rate has been a contributing factor to various housing issues, including the eviction of tenants for nonpayment of rent, and the growth of illegal boarding rooms, known as three-quarter houses, which are offered to single adults, who are often recovering from addiction or living with mental illness and are seeking housing and supportive services; and

Whereas, The demand in New York City for safe affordable housing cannot be adequately met by

current shelter allowance levels, especially given the rapidly rising cost of rent in the City, leaving vulnerable low-income and homeless populations with only limited and often exploitative housing options; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to promulgate a rule which would increase the current public assistance shelter allowance amounts in New York City.

TC/NV  
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03/18/2016