



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1607-2021, **Version:** *

Preconsidered Res. No. 1607

Resolution calling on the State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would expand eligibility for the Disability Rent Increase Exemption to include certain categories of immigrant New Yorkers who are currently excluded.

By Council Member Dromm

Whereas, The Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program, administered by the New York City Department of Finance, is a means-tested benefit that allows New York tenants living with a disability to apply for an exemption to future rent increases; and

Whereas, DRIE provides critical relief to those who are unable to earn a livable income due to a disability, by granting a property tax credit to the owner that covers the future rent increase; and

Whereas, DRIE, implemented in 2005, helps reduce displacement and keep individuals living with a disability in their homes; and

Whereas, DRIE eligibility relies on an income threshold, proof that the applicant is the primary leaseholder, and proof of disability, in addition to a minimum age of 18; and

Whereas, To prove disability, DRIE applicants must receive one of several types of income assistance: federal social security disability insurance (SSDI), supplemental security income (SSI), disability pension or compensation through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Postal Service, or retain previous eligibility for a federally administered disability benefit and currently receive medical assistance based on a determination of disability; and

Whereas, Most forms of disability income assistance are restricted to United States citizens and certain eligible categories of immigrants; and

Whereas, Eligible categories of immigrants include individuals who reside in the United States under certain humanitarian categories, have maintained lawful permanent residence for 5 years and received 40 qualified quarters of earnings, or have served in the United States' armed forces; and

Whereas, As a result, many immigrants living with disabilities are ineligible for federal income assistance and additionally excluded from the DRIE program; and

Whereas, American Community Survey data from 2019 estimates that 6.8 percent of New York City's population lives with a disability, and as many as 208,620 of those individuals are foreign-born; and

Whereas, In New York City, immigrants are disproportionately affected by the housing affordability crisis: 22 percent of immigrant New Yorkers live in overcrowded households as compared to 16.4 percent of U.S.-born New Yorkers; and

Whereas, Further, foreign-born New Yorkers who have not naturalized experience severe household overcrowding: 17.1 percent of those with an immigration status and 33 percent of undocumented New Yorkers live in overcrowded households; and

Whereas, Median rents in New York City have increased 4 percent year over year from 2005 to 2017, while incomes have increased just 1.9 percent for single adults and up to 3.4 percent for a married couple with two children, in that same time frame; and

Whereas, Non-citizen foreign born New Yorkers are disproportionately rent-burdened: 53 percent of status-holders and 52 percent of undocumented New Yorkers pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs, as compared to 48 percent of U.S.-born New Yorkers; and

Whereas, It is past time to extend the DRIE program to immigrant New Yorkers living with a disability who are in critical need of housing assistance and would be eligible for the program but for their lack of qualifying immigration status; and

Whereas, The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program, a parallel rent assistance means-tested benefit available to New Yorkers over the age of 62, provides the same relief without relying on

benefit receipt restricted to certain categories of immigrants; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would expand eligibility for the Disability Rent Increase Exemption to include certain categories of immigrant New Yorkers who are currently excluded.

EK
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3/29/2021