



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0892-2005, **Version:** *

Res. No. 892

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass legislation that will expand the number of senior citizens who would be eligible to participate in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program.

By The Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum) and Council Members Baéz, Avella, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Fidler, Foster, Gennaro, Gentile, Gerson, Gonzalez, James, Jennings, Katz, Koppell, Liu, Martinez, Palma, Quinn, Recchia Jr., Rivera, Sanders Jr., Vann and Weprin

Whereas, The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program provides orders preventing future rent increases to eligible senior citizen heads of household residing in rent-controlled, rent-stabilized and Mitchell-Lama apartments, and provides corresponding tax abatements to landlords; and

Whereas, The SCRIE program exists pursuant to New York State enabling legislation codified in Sections 467-b and 467-c of the Real Property Tax Law (RPTL); and

Whereas, Currently, to be eligible for SCRIE, a senior citizen must be at least 62 years of age, have an annual household income not exceeding \$24,000 and have an apartment with a rental value that exceeds one-third of such senior citizen's income; and

Whereas, According to the 2000 Census data, there are approximately 1.3 million people living in New York City who are over the age of 60; and

Whereas, Affordable housing has become increasingly difficult for senior citizens who are on fixed incomes; and

Whereas, According to recent testimony from the Department for the Aging, the median household income for New Yorkers between the ages of 65 and 74 is \$27,271, with such median income dropping to \$19,196 for those senior citizens who are age 75 and older; and

Whereas, The Rent Guidelines Board, in 2003, increased the rent for rent-stabilized apartments by 4.5 % and 7.5% for such apartments with a one-year and a two-year lease, respectively; and

Whereas, Pursuant to the New York City Administrative Code, section 26-405(a)(5), rent-controlled apartments may increase their rent by up to 7.5% annually; and

Whereas, Currently, only approximately 45,000 New York City senior citizens are enrolled in the SCRIE program; and

Whereas, Enacting a law that would expand the number of senior citizens who would be eligible to participate in the SCRIE

program would help alleviate some of the financial constraints faced by many New York City senior citizens and ensure that such senior citizens are able to remain in their homes and communities; and

Whereas, The New York State Legislature has several bills pending that would increase the maximum income eligibility threshold, including: A.539/S.361 (companion bills), which would raise the maximum income to \$27,000; A.232, which would raise the maximum income to \$30,000; A.1161 and S.1459 (non-companion bills), which would raise the maximum income to \$50,000; and A.776, which would allow the commissioner of housing and community renewal to increase the maximum income eligibility threshold annually; and

Whereas, The New York State Legislature has several bills that would further expand the number of senior citizens who would be eligible for the SCRIE program, including: A.1712/S.929 (companion bills), which would require that the rent constitute at least one-fourth (rather than one-third) of the senior's income; A.3372, which would exclude social security payments and supplemental security income from the definition of "income" for purposes of determining SCRIE eligibility; and A.5129, which would exclude 25% of social security income from the definition of "income" under SCRIE; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass legislation that will expand the number of senior citizens who would be eligible to participate in the SCRIE program.

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