



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1308-2008, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1308

Resolution calling upon the New York City Housing Authority to allow the City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court to set up an assistance table for the benefit of unrepresented residents outside NYCHA housing administrative tribunal hearings.

By Council Members Mendez, Jackson, James, Mark-Viverito, Brewer, Fidler, Foster, Koppell, Liu, Gerson and Lappin.

Whereas, The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is the nation's largest housing authority with approximately 345 developments and 2,700 buildings comprising 181,000 units and 410,000 authorized tenants; and

Whereas, NYCHA housing issues involving its residents, such as proceedings to terminate a tenancy, are adjudicated at NYCHA administrative tribunals before hearing officers and are not adjudicated in the City's Housing Court system; and

Whereas, Many NYCHA residents without legal counsel who have appeared before NYCHA's administrative tribunals have reportedly been deprived of their constitutional and due process rights, such as allegedly being coerced by NYCHA attorneys, before the appearance at the actual administrative hearing, to sign stipulations that are detrimental to such NYCHA residents or not in conformance with NYCHA's own Termination Procedures; and

Whereas, The City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court (CWTFHC) is a non-profit coalition of housing advocates that was established in 1981 to address injustices faced by indigent litigants who cannot afford an attorney to represent them in landlord/tenant proceedings in Housing Court; and

Whereas, According to the CWTFHC's website, its staff currently "collaborates with community groups, legal service providers, eviction prevention specialists, academicians, and elected officials to further the

goal of justice in Housing Court as a means of abating homelessness in New York City;” and

Whereas, The CWTFHC constantly provides a presence at each of the City’s Housing Courts with assistance/information tables; and

Whereas, According to the CWTFHC, its information tables annually provide assistance to approximately 60,000 people most of whom are tenants, at which CWTFHC staff and volunteers answer questions and provide factsheets, referrals to legal service providers and other eviction prevention organizations, resources, and agencies; and

Whereas, NYCHA does not currently allow CWTFHC to set up assistance tables outside NYCHA’s administrative tribunal hearings where NYCHA tenant cases are adjudicated; and

Whereas, The CWTFHC should be allowed to set up their assistance tables in a prominent location outside NYCHA administrative tribunal hearings where tenant issues are adjudicated to provide information and help guard against possible infringements of constitutional and due process rights to which residents of NYCHA developments are entitled; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Housing Authority to allow the City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court to set up an assistance table for the benefit of unrepresented residents outside NYCHA housing administrative tribunal hearings.

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