Housing for people, not profit

Tenant Inquilino

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DHCR Trying to Gut Tenant Protections; Outrage Slows the Tide

By Dave Powell

On April 5 a small and little-known message went out in the New York State Register: The state Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) announced it would amend the state's Rent Stabilization Code, as it had hinted it would nine months earlier. On the surface the announcement seemed innocent enough. After all, the code had not been "adjusted" to match up with the major changes in the law resulting from the Rent Regulation "Reform" Act of 1997. But on the surface is exactly where the innocence of the gesture began and ended.

On further inquiry, a group of tenant attorneys discovered that the "adjustments" in question were actually 150 pages worth of major code changes. According to the group, an ad-hoc team of Legal Services lawyers, lawyers from private tenant firms and tenant advocates, the changes go way beyond the anti-tenant measures passed in 1997. The DHCR is using the'97 changes as a pretext for an attempt to regulate areas over which it has previously had no jurisdiction. A brief outline of some of the changes is listed below.

DHCR was also apparently at no loss for sleazy tactics in sneaking themeasures past an unsuspecting public. As is required by both the state Rent Stabilization Code and the Administrative Procedure Act, a hearing was scheduled to solicit testimony from the over 2 million tenants who stand to be affected. But the "public" hearing, which took place at Borough of Manhattan Community College on May 25, appears to have been designed for obscurity. The DHCR made little to no attempt to alert the public of this hearing, and managed very cleverly to schedule it two days after Tenant Lobby Day and three weeks before the city Rent Guidelines Board hearing.

With such short notice and ominous scheduling, tenant attendance was destined to be dismal — a fact which wasn't lost on DHCR Executive Assistant Michael Berrios. One BMCC faculty member reports that while booking theroom at the college, Berrios let it be known that he expected the hearing to yield a "low turnout."

CENEN

Tenants line up outside State Sen. Tom Duane's Albany office on Tenant Lobby Day. Story on page 5.

Though their numbers were small, a core group of tenants and their allies showed up to register their outrage to the six-member hearing panel of DHCR officials. State Senator Tom Duane and Councilmember Stanley Michels both weighed in against the changes, as did representatives from the offices of Assemblymembers Deborah Glick and Scott Stringer, and Councilmember Christine Quinn. All the usual suspects from the world of tenant advocacy and activism blasted away, and a

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Tenants to Rudy's RGB: Kill the Poor Tax

By Kenny Schaeffer

With landlord profits at an all-time high following back-to-back 11% increases, and with rents spiraling out of range for both the poor and the middle class, New York City tenants are calling on Mayor Giuliani's Rent Guidelines Board to retreat from the preliminary increases it proposed on May 8. The RGB called for the highest increases since 1996: 4% for a one-year renewal, 6% for a two-year renewal, and an additional "poor tax" of $15 a month on rents below $500.

The "poor tax," or low-rent surcharge, has been imposed in all six years of the Giuliani administration, and its compound effect has contributed to the loss of half of all apartments renting for below $500 since 1993.

Based on the federal rent-hardship level of 30% of income, a $500 apartment is affordable only to families making at least $20,000 annually, yet the median income in households with rents under $500 is only $15,000. According to 1999 US Census Bureau data, 68.6% of families living in these apartments are African-American or Latino.

For this reason, groups which previously have not been directly involved in Rent Guidelines Board issues, like the Coalition for the Homeless and the Community Food Resource Center, are joining Met Council and other housing advocates in demanding that the RGB kill the poor tax in 2000.

In the last two years alone, owners' "profit" per apartment—the difference between what it costs to maintain an apartment and what they collect as rent, also known as "net operating income"—has risen, from $250 a month to almost $300. Additionally, many studies have shown that the RGB has always overcompensated owners, in several ways. For one thing, following the sharp fuel-price increases of the 1970s, the board imposed steep permanent rent increases, based on assumptions that owners would use the same amount of fuel as when it was cheaper, and that their costs would therefore go up. What studies have shown, however, is that owners simply cut back on heating their buildings, and fuel expenditures rose hardly at all—yet rents rose sharply, and of course did not come down when fuel costs dropped.

Additionally, in years when owners' costs did

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

In NYCHA Switcheroo, Harlem Tenants Lose HOPE VI

by Alyssa Katz

Their buildings on 114th Street won't be torn down—merely gutted and rebuilt. Nonetheless, the news was a bombshell for the tenants of A. Philip Randolph Houses in Harlem. This winter, they learned that they would be displaced for a long time, and that some of them weren't going to be able to come back.

Now, the residents have been hit with another surprise: In May, the New York City Housing Authority announced that it will not be seeking the federal funding that would not only have fixed the buildings, but added social-services counseling, job training, and a computer lab to the project.

Earlier this year, tenants learned that the Housing Authority planned to apply for federal money to rebuild the 36 run-down tenement buildings that form this housing project. But there was a big catch, one that outraged residents. The funding was to come from HOPE VI, a federal housing program that requires that developments be scaled down in size or density. Once the rehab was complete, there wouldn't be room for all 322 families that now live in the buildings.

With the help of Harlem elected officials, tenants successfully pressured NYCHA to revise its blueprints and squeeze in additional low-rent apartments alongside the new condos and higher-priced rentals that the federal government requires through this program. It seemed to be a brilliant compromise, fulfilling tenant needs, housing authority priorities, and federal funding rules.

But weeks later, the housing authority suddenly announced that it wouldn't apply for the money after all.

According to sources familiar with the discussions, an internal NYCHA review concluded in late April that the application wouldn't meet the federal government's stringent requirements for the competitive HOPE VI grants. (Among many other things, the projects to be rebuilt must be seriously deteriorated and be replaced largely with low-rise, owner-occupied townhouses.)

Tenants were furious about the decision, and even angrier that Sharon Ebert, the agency's director of housing finance and development, had given a detailed presentation on the plan only days before at a community board meeting—even though she reportedly already knew the application was dead.

The switcheroo was particularly embarrassing for tenant association leader Roberta Coleman, who had announced at the meeting, "I am in agreement with HOPE VI. If there are things I don't know, I'm relying on elected officials to tell me."

"This is the hope that turns into a lie," rages Councilman Bill Perkins, whose Harlem district includes the buildings. He predicts the housing authority will have a tough time regaining tenants' trust. "People are now going to fear the worst—the racism fears, the gentrification fears, all the bogeymen are going to come out." Perkins had a particularly strong stake in the process, because he helped the tenants negotiate the deal.

NYCHA Commissioner John Martinez reportedly told the project's planners that the city will proceed with the reconstruction anyway, using other sources of money.

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EL INQUILINO HISPANO

Por un Cambio Inesperado de NYCHA, Los Inquilinos en Harlem Pierden HOPE VI

Por Alyssa Katz
Traducido por Lightning Translations

Sus edificios en la calle 114 no se derribarán; solamente se reconstruirán desde las paredes. Sin embargo, la noticia estalló como una bomba para los inquilinos de las viviendas A. Philip Randolph en Harlem. El invierno pasado, se enteraron que se les iban a desplazar por mucho tiempo, y que unos de ellos no podrían volver.

Más recientemente, hubo otra sorpresa para los inquilinos: en mayo, la Autoridad de Vivienda de la Ciudad de Nueva York (NYCHA, por sus siglas en inglés) hizo saber que no va a buscar el dinero federal que no solamente hubiera reparado los edificios, sino también hubiera añadido al proyecto consejos de servicios sociales, entrenamiento de trabajo y un laboratorio de computadoras.

Anteriormente en este año, los inquilinos se enteraron que la autoridad de vivienda local tuvo planeado solicitar fondos federales para reconstruir los 36 edificios en malas condiciones que forman este proyecto de vivienda. Pero hubo un gran trueo, lo cual enfureció a los residentes. Los fondos iban a provenir de HOPE VI, un programa de vivienda federal que requiere que las urbanizaciones se disminuyan o en tamaño o en su densidad de población. Después de la reconstrucción, no habría cupo para todas las 322 familias que actualmente viven en los edificios.

Con la ayuda de funcionarios electos en Harlem, los inquilinos presionaron exitosamente a NYCHA para que la autoridad revisara su proyecto, metiendo apartamentos adicionales de bajos alquileres al lado de los nuevos condominios y apartamentos de alquileres más altos que requiere el gobierno federal en este programa. Parecía un arreglo brillante, que a la vez cumplía las necesidades de los inquilinos, las prioridades de la autoridad de vivienda, y las reglas de financiamiento federales.

Pero unas semanas más tarde, la autoridad de vivienda de repente declaró que después de todo, no iba a solicitar el dinero.

Según fuentes que están al tanto de las discusio-

pasa a la página 4

Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 31)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 1999 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2000, incluyendo las concesiones de Pataki adoptadas por la Legislatura Estatal el 19 de junio de 1997

Los topes de renta que aparecen en el cuadro son los incrementos máximos que los dueños de edificios pueden cobrar legalmente por los apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad de Nueva York. Son válidos para todos los contratos que comienzan dentro del período de doce meses a partir del 1ro. de octubre de 1999. Los incrementos de alquiler basados en las pautas para la renovación del contrato de 1 o 2 años pueden cobrarse solamente una vez durante el período cubierto por dichas pautas, y deben ser aplicados a la renta legal estabilizada para el 30 de septiembre de 1999. Las cantidades que aparecen en el cuadro y los incrementos para los apartamentos vacíos no se aplican a los apartamentos que estaban sujetos a renta controlada en aquella fecha.

Los Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos o Nuevos En junio de 1997, el gobernador George Pataki, al intentar destruir la regulación de rentas, forzó cambios que les dieron a los caseros una sobrepaga muy grande por los apartamentos vacíos. Una cláusula de la "Reforma al Acta de Regulación de Renta" de 1997 permite que los nuevos alquileres sean incrementados en un porcentaje obligatorio: 20% para un contrato de dos años, y por un contrato de 1 año, 20% de incremento menos la diferencia en el tope de renovación para los contratos de 1 y 2 años. La nueva ley permite también incrementos adicionales para los apartamentos vacíos donde no se habían cobrado incrementos por desocupación por ocho años o más.

Sobrecargos de Renta Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros van a aprovecharse de la complejidad de estas regulaciones y sobrepagas, así como del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus apartamentos, para cobrar un alquiler ilegal. Una vez que el inquilino haya tomado posesión del apartamento, puede escoger entre llenar un formulario de queja de sobrecargo de renta con la oficina de la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal (DHCR), o disputar la cantidad de la renta en la corte de vivienda de la ciudad para que se determine cuál es el alquiler legal.

Si un posible inquilino da muestras de conocer sus derechos, lo más probable es que el casero no firmará ningún contrato con tal inquilino. Los caseros evitan contratar con inquilinos que les pueden dar problemas. El sobrecargo de alquiler es muy común. Todos los inquilinos deben luchar contra posibles sobrecargos. Obtenga y llene un formulario *Form RA-89* con la oficina de DHCR para determinar el alquiler correcto en los archivos oficiales. Llame a la DHCR a (718) 739-6400 para obtener un formulario.

La Apelación de la Renta de Mercado Justa Otro tipo de sobrecargo ocurre frecuentemente cuando se vacía un apartamento que previamente estaba sujeto a renta controlada y se alquila con renta estabilizada. La Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) establece anualmente lo que ellos llaman el "Tope Especial de la Renta de Mercado Justa," el cual es empleado por la DHCR para bajar las rentas de mercado injustas de los inquilinos que llenan el formulario llamado "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" (FMRA). Según la Orden 31, es la Renta de Mercado Justa de HUD o un 150% sobre la renta base máxima. Ningún inquilino de un apartamento de renta estabilizada que fue descontrolado el 1ro he abril de 1984 o después debe dejar de poner a prueba la llamada "Renta Legal Inicial Regulada" (renta de mercado) que los caseros cobran cuando hay descontrol del apartamento. Use el formulario de DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indique claramente que su queja es tanto una queja de "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" como de "sobrecargo." La corte de vivienda no puede tomar decisión sobre una Apelación de Renta de Mercado. Apartamentos vacíos que antes estaban controlados en edificios que se han convertido en cooperativas o condominios no se vuelven estabilizados y no satisfacen los requisitos para la Apelación de la Renta Justa de Mercado.

Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad: Las personas de 62 años o más que viven en apartamentos estabilizados y cuyos ingresos familiares anuales son de $20,000 o menos, y que pagan (o enfrentan un incremento de alquiler que los forzaría a pagar) una renta de un tercio o más de sus ingresos, pueden tener derecho al programa de Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad (SCRIE, por sus siglas en inglés), si aplican al Departamento de la Ciudad de Nueva York Sobre las Personas de Mayor Edad, cuya dirección es: SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. Si el alquiler actual de un inquilino que tiene derecho a este programa sobrepasa un tercio del ingreso, no se lo puede reducir, pero es posible evitar incrementos de alquiler en el futuro. Obtenga el formulario de SCRIE por llamar al (212) 442-1000.

Unidades de Desván (Lofts) Los incrementos legales sobre la renta base para las unidades de desván son de un 1 por ciento por un contrato de un año y un 2 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

Hoteles y Apartamentos de una Sola Habitación Lo establecido es un 4% para los apartamentos de hotel de Clase A, casas de habitaciones, hoteles de clase B (de 30 habitaciones o más), hoteles de una sola habitación, y las casas de habitaciones (Clase B, 6-29 cuartos), sobre la renta legal que se pagaba el 30 de septiembre de 1999. No se permiten incrementos para apartamentos vacíos. Lo incremento estipulado no se puede cobrar a menos que un 70 por ciento de las unidades en el edificio sean ocupadas por inquilinos permanentes de renta estabilizada o controlada, pagando rentas reguladas legales. Además, no se permiten incrementos si el casero ha omitido de darle al nuevo ocupante una copia de los Derechos y Responsabilidades de los Dueños e Inquilinos de Hoteles.

La Desregulación de Rentas Altas y Altos Ingresos (1) Los apartamentos que legalmente se alquilan por $2,000 o más por mes y que se desocuparon entre el 7 de julio de 1993 y el 1ro. de octubre de 1993, o en o desde del 1ro de abril de 1994 son sujetos a la desregulación. (2) La misma desregulación se les aplica, para el mismo período establecido en (1), a los apartamentos que legalmente pagan $2,000 o más mensualmente aunque no se desocupen, si el ingreso total de la familia es más de $175,000 en los dos años consecutivos previos. Para cumplir los requisitos de esta segunda forma de desregulación, el casero tiene que enviarle un formulario de certificación de ingreso al inquilino entre el 1ro de enero y el 1ro de mayo, así como someter dicho formulario al DHCR y conseguir su aprobación.

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual		Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años
Renovación del Contrato	Más de $500		2%	4%
	$500 o menos (Alquileres de $215 o menos se alzan a $215 después de aplicarse los aumentos)		2% + $15	4% + $15
Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos	Más de $500	Incrementos por desocupacíon cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18%	20%
		Incrementos por desocupacíon no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 18%	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 20%
	Less than $300	Incrementos por desocupacíon cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18% + $100	20% + $100
		Incrementos por desocupacíon no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 18% + $100	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 20% + $100
	Renta de $300 a $500	Incrementos por desocupacíon cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18% o $100, lo que sea mayor	20% o $100, lo que sea mayor
		Incrementos por desocupacíon no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 18%, o $100, lo que sea mayor	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 20%, o $100, lo que sea mayor

Seminario Teológico Judío Continúa Juicio Contra Inquilinos

Por Vajra Kilgour
Traducido por Lightning Translations

Hace casi un año y medio, un grupo de inquilinos de renta estabilizada en la calle 122 Oeste ganaron una victoria en la Corte de Vivienda, cuando la juez Laurie Lau falló que el Seminario Teológico Judío no podía desalojarlos para volver los edificios en un dormitorio de estudiantes (*Tenant/Inquilino,* febrero de 1999). El fallo se basó en un principio bien fundamentado de la ley que gobierna las corporaciones: el seminario había transferido la titularidad de los edificios a una corporación con fines de lucro, de la cual el seminario era el único accionista, cuando los inquilinos se mudaron a sus apartamentos. Según la ley, el seminario sólo podía desalojar a los inquilinos si hubiera poseído los edificios en el momento que aquellos los ocuparon. La juez Lau rehusó dejar al seminario desestimar la personalidad societaria, y falló que el seminario ahora, después de gozar las ventajas de la posesión de los edificios por una corporación distinta, no podía evitar las desventajas del arreglo.

Los que convinieron hasta el 15 de mayo mudarse para el 1 de septiembre cobrarían $25,000—una pequeña fracción del valor de un contrato de renta estabilizada.

Durante el año pasado, el seminario les dio a entender a los inquilinos que no propuso perfeccionar una apelación al fallo de la juez Lau, sino sólo quería resolver las cuestiones restantes en torno a la renovación de contratos y los gastos legales. Cuando, finalmente, el seminario no resolvió estas cuestiones, la abogada de los inquilinos, Catharine A. Grad del bufete Grad & Weinraub, realizó una petición para que la apelación del seminario se destituyera.

Tan pronto como se dio cuenta de que los inquilinos estuvieron realizando una petición para destituir su apelación y recuperar los gastos legales en la corte, el seminario amenazó con continuar el litigio si los inquilinos no entregaban sus hogares. A mediados de abril, les avisó a los inquilinos que continuaría el pleito si estos no aceptaban una oferta de compra: los que convinieron hasta el 15 de mayo mudarse para el 1 de septiembre cobrarían $25,000—una pequeña fracción del valor de un contrato de renta estabilizada, y apenas lo suficiente para cubrir la renta más alta por uno o dos años en un nuevo apartamento. Si diez o más inquilinos aceptaran la oferta, el seminario les ofrecería $30,000, aparentemente con la esperanza de que los inquilinos serían dispuestos, por $5,000 cada uno, a encargarse de ayudar al seminario a vaciar los edificios de todos los inquilinos de renta regulada.

El 26 de mayo, cuando se hizo claro que los inquilinos no se amedrentarían, el seminario realizó una petición interpuesta contra la de los inquilinos, pidiendo más tiempo para perfeccionar una apelación. En su petición, el seminario alegó falsamente que se había dedicado a negociar con los inquilinos durante todo el año y medio pasado, y que les había ofrecido tanto dinero como vivienda alternativa desde el principio. La ironía de la falsificación se destaca por el hecho de que fue el seminario mismo al que habían ofrecido—y que había rechazado—vivienda alternativa para estudiantes, en un dormitorio nuevo que la Universidad de Columbia construía.

Catharine Grad no cree que haya una base de buena fe para que el seminario siga con el juicio: "El seminario sabe muy bien que no hay ningún fundamento legal para impugnar el fallo de la juez Laurie Lau. No está continuando el juicio porque cree que al fin puede prevalecer en las cortes; simplemente espera que los inquilinos se cansen de tanto pleito y se rindan. Obviamente, el seminario no entiende que los inquilinos harán lo necesario para salvar sus hogares, donde han vivido por décadas. Es muy triste pensar que una institución educativa o religiosa pueda mostrar una indiferencia tan cruel a las vidas de la gente de la comunidad."

HOPE VI

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nes, un análisis interno de la autoridad de vivienda concluyó al fin de abril que la solicitud no llenaría todos los requisitos rigurosos de las subvenciones competitivas de HOPE VI. (Entre muchas otras cosas, los proyectos que se reconstruyen tienen que ser muy deteriorados, y remplazarse en su mayoría con casas particulares de mínima altura, que sean ocupados por sus propios dueños.)

Los inquilinos se enfurecieron por la decisión, y más molestos aun porque Sharon Ebert, la directora de financiamiento y desarrollo de vivienda en la agencia, había hecho una presentación detallada del plan unos escasos días antes, en una reunión de la junta comunal—a pesar de que según se dice, ella ya sabía que la solicitud no siguió en pie.

El cambio inesperado fue particularmente vergonzoso para el líder de la asociación de inquilinos, Roberta Coleman, quien había declarado en la reunión, "Estoy de acuerdo con HOPE VI. Si hay cosas que no sé, confío en que los oficiales electos me informen."

"Es esto la esperanza que se vuelve en mentira," dijo con rabia el concejal Bill Perkins, cuyo distrito en Harlem abarca los edificios. El pronostica que la autoridad de vivienda tendrá grandes dificultades en recuperar la confianza de los inquilinos. "La gente va a empezar a temer lo peor—los temores al racismo, los temores a la gentrificación, todos los espectros saldrán." Perkins tenía mucho en juego en el proceso, porque ayudó a los inquilinos a negociar el pacto.

Según se dice, el comisario de NYCHA John Martinez les dijo a los planificadores del proyecto que de todas maneras la ciudad procederá con la reconstrucción, usando otras fuentes de dinero.

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Tenants' Rights

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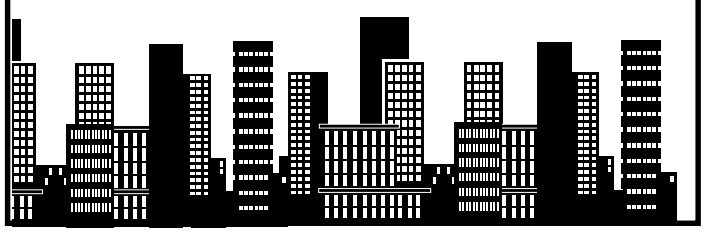

The Other Harlem Renaissance

By Kathleen McGowan

Any regular reader of the Sunday *New York Times* will be familiar with that paper's version of the nouveau Harlem-a neighborhood most noted for Fairway, Citarella and an upper-middle-class real-estate boom. Stories feature happy young homeowners gushing over the cheap deals: "People are friendlier than on the Upper West Side," burbles one new owner.

But there's an engine of public policy and money behind that private-sector rebirth, one that now seems to be kicking into a higher gear. In the last few months, the city's housing department has unleashed or reactivated a slew of programs for dilapidated apartment buildings. Harlem, which still has plenty of neglected properties, will be especially affected: Altogether, nearly 200 buildings between 110th Street and 148th Street will be on the move within the year. Most will rent or sell for market rates.

Altogether, nearly 200 buildings between 110th Street and 148th Street will be on the move within the year. Most will rent or sell for market rates.

• The city's new Vacant Buildings program, formally announced last week, will develop 87 city-owned buildings and seven vacant lots into condos, co-ops and rentals. Sixty of the buildings and five of the lots are in West Harlem's Community Board 10. The new homes will have no income restrictions for renters or buyers.

• Over the next year, the city will remove up to 80 run-down Harlem buildings from negligent private owners in the first full round of its Third Party Transfer initiative, handing them over to new owners that are specially approved by HPD.

• Under Asset Sales, roughly a dozen city-owned Harlem buildings are now slated for sale. Through this program, tenants get the first shot at buying the building. If they can't arrange the cash, the properties will be sold to the general public.

Tenant advocates worry that one of the last reservoirs of cheap housing is drying up. Another concern: That central Harlem, still a very poor neighborhood, will have a glut of market-rate condos and co-ops within a few years.

"The market is hot," admitted one housing expert, "but adding a huge amount of housing without any income guidelines [for residents] seems a little foolhardy."

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Tenants Confront Silver on Albany Lobby Day

By Noel Prince

On Tuesday, May 23, tenants and tenant organizers set their alarms for 5 A.M. to get on the bus for the annual trip to Albany. Tenant Lobby Day gives us a chance to meet face to face with state legislators to discuss individual problems, get support for pending legislation, and ask questions on what their representatives are doing about the problems facing New York City tenants.

Our bus was an hour late and didn't go much over 50 mph, so we arrived after the scheduled morning briefing, but just in time for the news conference. There were about 500 tenants already seated in the Hearing Room as city Public Advocate Mark Green, city Comptroller Alan Hevesi and state Comptroller Carl McCall spoke in support of pro-tenant bills proposed by various state legislators.

These measures include repealing the Urstadt Law, which bars the city from passing rent controls stronger than the state's; the MCI Bill, which would limit rent increases landlords can receive from major capital improvements; expanding SCRIE (the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program) to include disabled rent-regulated and Mitchell-Lama tenants; and the Section 8 Bill, which would place former project-based Section 8 buildings under rent stabilization. They also discussed the city Rent Guidelines Board's proposed increases for 2000. After a hurried roster of the day's meetings, tenants began the task of appealing to Democrats and Republicans to work harder to enact this legislation.

I was one of many "captains" given the task of facilitating meetings. Though I am a longtime resident of the Lower East Side, I was scheduled to meet with State Senator Guy Velella (R-Bronx) and Assemblymember Jeff Dinowitz (D-Bronx). I enjoyed meeting with Northwest Bronx United Tenants, and found them savvy, articulate and uncompromising.

Velella, who voted against renewing rent regulations in 1997, told us he was on board for all pending legislation, but said he worried that if the Senate repealed the Urstadt Law, the New York City Council might do away with tenant protections all together.

CENEN

Assemblymember Steven Sanders meets with tenants.

We all had a good laugh, and I asked if the real-estate lobby was the real reason Albany didn't want to relinquish control over the Rent Laws. Velella replied that landlords did spend a great deal of money lobbying Albany, but that they did not influence his vote.

We were all relieved. Velella said he would endorse the MCI, Urstadt, and Mitchell-Lama bills.

Our afternoon meeting with Assemblymember Dinowitz was rather sobering, as we noted that the Republican majority in the State Senate makes it unlikely that pro-tenant legislation will even make it to the floor for a vote. He spoke honestly of our chances, and thought that the MCI Bill might make it through because 2000 is an election year. We discussed the odds of winning a Democratic majority in the Senate this fall and how it might affect NYC tenants.

By far the most controversial meeting was not even on the day's schedule: an on-again, off-again late-afternoon meeting with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan), who had just survived an attempt to depose him by Assembly Majority Leader Michael Bragman the day before. The Citywide Tenants Coalition had scheduled the meeting, but New York State Tenants and Neighbors had pulled out after disagreeing on what they felt was too confrontational an agenda. I was excited by the prospect of protesting Silver's betrayal of tenants in 1997, and hoped for a large turnout.

At 3:30 P.M., about 50 tenants gathered in Silver's office, only to be left waiting for 20 minutes. After we took a vote to walk out in protest, Silver's general counsel came out to apologize for the speaker's absence, saying he was having a very difficult day because of the campaign to oust him, and contending that if Bragman had successfully dethroned Silver, tenants would be in much more serious trouble.

A heated discussion ensued and Nellie Bailey from the West Harlem Tenants and Jeanie Dubnau of Citywide Tenants spoke passionately about the repercussions of Silver's actions in 1997, and requested a meeting with the speaker on the Lower East Side.

Silver's lawyer agreed to set up another meeting and walked out quickly. As I asked him if Silver was going to do anything about the state Division of Housing and Community renewal's proposed changes to the Rent Stabilization Code, he went through a rear door and pulled it shut behind him. I tried opening it, but he held it closed, and I could hear his muffled voice through the door: "He is writing a letter!"

I felt this had been a most eye-opening meeting, and that our message to Silver had been heard, even if he *was* down the hall waiting for us to leave. We saw him walking back down the hall as we boarded the elevator downstairs.

After boarding our bus, the driver led us in "A Prayer for the Traveler" before disembarking. This made us all little uneasy, and soon afterwards we got lost and were told the steering was pulling to the left. I was relieved by the thought that if we did have an accident, we weren't going fast enough to seriously injure anyone. The best Lobby Day ever.

Rally and Overnight Vigil Against Rudy's Rent Increases

Tuesday, June 13, 6-8 p.m./Dusk until Dawn
Gracie Mansion, Front Entrance
East 88 Street and East End Ave., Manhattan

Directions: By subway, take the 4, 5, 6 or any train to 86th Street, then walk to 88th & East End. By bus, take the M86 down 86th St. to 88th and York; or take the First Avenue bus (M15) to 88th St. and 1st Ave and walk east; or take the M31 down 57th (it starts at Broadway) and get off at 88th & York.

Bring sleeping bags, instruments, jackets, food and supplies if you plan to sleep over!

In every year since he took office, Rudy Giuliani's Rent Guidelines Board has slammed thousands of rent-stabilized tenants with a "poor tax" of $15. The "poor tax" is a surcharge that is added to all stabilized rents of $500 or less, in addition to the standard renewal increases. The vast majority of people who get this surcharge are on a fixed income, and nearly 70% are Black or Latino. On June 22, the RGB will again vote on increases affecting rent-stabilized tenants, including the "poor tax."

The RGB is proposing 4% and 6% increases on renewal leases (one and two years respectively) for all rent-stabilized tenants. In addition, it plans to once again clobber low-income tenants with the $15 "poor tax." Giuliani, who lives rent-free in the elegance of Gracie Mansion, appoints all nine members of the board. The RGB's suggested increases (the highest since 1996) come at a time when social services are sustaining heavy cuts and landlord profits are at an all-time high. It's time to say "No More!"

Met Council on Housing
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e-mail: activemch@aol.com

Jewish Theological Seminary Continues to Litigate Against Tenants

By Vajra Kilgour

Nearly a year and a half ago, a group of rent-stabilized tenants in two buildings on West 122nd Street won a victory in Housing Court when Judge Laurie Lau ruled that the Jewish Theological Seminary could not evict them to make dormitory space for its students (*Tenant/Inquilino,* Feb. '99).

The decision was based on a well-established principle of law governing corporations: At the time the tenants had moved into their homes, JTS had transferred ownership of the buildings to a for-profit corporation, of which the seminary was the sole shareholder. Under the law, JTS could only evict the tenants if it had owned the buildings at the time they took occupancy. Judge Lau declined to allow the seminary to pierce its own corporate veil, finding that it could not, after having availed itself of the advantages of having a separate corporation own the buildings, now escape the disadvantages.

During the past year, the seminary led the tenants to believe that it did not intend to perfect an appeal of Judge Lau's decision, but only wanted to resolve remaining issues pertaining to lease renewals and attorneys' fees. When JTS did not ultimately resolve these issues, the tenants' lawyer, Catharine A. Grad of Grad & Weinraub, moved to dismiss its appeal.

As soon as the seminary realized that the tenants were moving to dismiss the appeal and seek attorneys' fees from the court, it once again threatened continued litigation if the tenants did not give up their homes. In mid-April, it advised them that it would continue with the lawsuits if they did not accept a buyout offer: Anyone who would agree, by May 15, to move by September 1 would get $25,000—a fraction of the value of a rent-stabilized lease, and scarcely enough to cover increased rent in a new apartment for more than a year or two. If 10 or more tenants accepted, the seminary offered to give them $30,000, apparently in the hope that the tenants would be willing, for $5,000 apiece, to take it upon themselves to help the seminary empty the buildings of rent-regulated tenants.

On May 26, when it became clear that the tenants were not going to be intimidated, the seminary cross-moved, asking for more time to perfect an appeal. In its motion, it falsely alleged that it had devoted the entire past year and a half to negotiating with the tenants, offering them both alternative housing and buyouts all along. The irony of the fabrication is underscored by the fact that it was JTS that was offered—and rejected—alternative housing for students, in a new dorm being built by Columbia University.

Catharine Grad does not believe that JTS has a good-faith basis to pursue its lawsuit: "The seminary is well aware that there is no legal basis to challenge the decision of Judge Laurie Lau. It is not continuing litigation because it believes it can ultimately prevail in the courts; it's simply hoping that the tenants will get tired of all the litigation and give up. Obviously the seminary doesn't understand that the tenants will continue to do what is necessary to protect their homes, where they've been living for decades. And it is very sad to think that an educational or religious institution would have such a callous disregard for the lives of the people in the community."

E-mail Met Council
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NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 31)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 1999 through Sept. 30, 2000, including the Pataki vacancy bonuses adopted by the State Legislature on June 19, 1997

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent		One-year Lease	Two-year Lease
Renewal Leases	more than $500		2%	4%
	$500 or less (Rents that are $215 or less brought up to $215 after increases applied)		2% plus $15	4% plus $15
Vacancy leases	More than $500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18%	20%
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18%	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%
	Less than $300	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18% plus $100	20% plus $100
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allow–ance, plus 18% plus $100	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allow–ance, plus 20% plus $100
	Rent $300 to $500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18% *or* $100, whichever is greater	20% *or* $100, whichever is greater
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18%, *or* $100, whichever is greater	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%, *or* $100, whichever is greater

The above rent guidelines table shows the maximum increases landlords in New York City can legally charge for rent stabilized apartments on all leases commencing in the twelve-month period beginning October 1, 1999. Increases in rent based on the 1- or 2-year renewal guidelines can be charged only once during the period covered by the guidelines, and must be applied to the legal stabilized rent on September 30, 1999. The above guidelines and vacancy bonuses do not apply to an apartment which was rent controlled on that date.

Vacancy Leases

In June 1997, Governor George Pataki, as a part of his efforts to destroy rent regulation, forced changes that gave landlords large vacancy bonuses. Provisions of his Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 allow the rents of apartments to rise by a statutory percentage: 20 percent for a 2-year lease, and 20 percent minus the difference between the 1- and 2-year renewal guidelines for 1-year leases. The new law also allows additional vacancy increases for apartments which have had no vacancy allowance in eight or more years.

Rent Overcharges

Tenants should be aware that many landlords will exploit the complexities of these guidelines and bonuses, and the tenant's unfamiliarity with the apartment's rent history, to charge an illegal rent. The tenant can choose between filing an overcharge complaint with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal or challenging the rent in Housing Court to get a determination of the legal rent.

A prospective tenant who expresses knowledge of their rights will probably not be given a lease to sign. Landlords avoid renting to tenants who may be troublesome. Overcharging is very common. Every tenant should challenge possible overcharge. With DHCR, obtain and fill out *Form RA-89* to determine the correct rent from official records. Call DHCR at (718) 739-6400 to obtain the form.

Fair Market Rent Appeal

Another type of overcharge frequently occurs at the time that a previously rent controlled apartment becomes vacant and is re-rented as a stabilized unit. The Rent Guidelines Board annually sets what they call the "Special Fair Market Rent Guideline" that is used by DHCR to lower unfair market rents for tenants who file the Fair Market Rent Appeal (FMRA). Under Order 31, it is HUD Fair Market Rent or 150% above the maximum base rent. No stabilized tenant of an apartment that was decontrolled on or after April 1, 1984 should fail to challenge the so-called Initial Legal Regulated Rent (market rent) that landlords charge upon decontrol. Use DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indicate clearly that your complaint is both a complaint of "overcharge" and "Fair Market Rent Appeal." The Housing Court cannot determine a Fair Market Rent Appeal. Formerly controlled vacant apartments in buildings converted to co-ops or condos do not become stabilized and are not eligible for a Fair Market Rent Appeal.

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption

Rent stabilized seniors, 62 years or older, whose disposable annual household income is $20,000 or less and who pay (or face a rent increase that would cause them to pay) one-third or more of that income in rent may be eligible for a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) if they apply to the NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit at 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. If an otherwise eligible tenant's current rent level is already above one-third of income, it cannot be rolled back, but future rent increases may be waived. Obtain the SCRIE application form by calling (212) 442-1000.

Loft Units

Legalized loft unit increases above the base rent are 1 percent for a one-year lease and 2 percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

Hotels and SROs

The guideline is 4 percent for Class A apartment hotels, lodging houses, Class B hotels (30 rooms or more), single room occupancy (SROs) hotels, and rooming houses (Class B, 6-29 rooms), above the legal rent paid on September 30, 1999. No vacancy allowance is permitted. The guideline is not collectible unless 70% or more of the units in the building are occupied by permanent rent stabilized or controlled tenants paying legal regulated rents. Further, no increase is allowed when the landlord has failed to provide the new occupant a copy of the Rights and Duties of Hotel Owners and Tenants.

High-rent, High-income Deregulation

(1) Apartments legally renting for $2,000 or more a month that became vacant from July 7, 1993 through October 1, 1993, or on April 1, 1994 and thereafter are subject to deregulation. (2) The same deregulation applies in the time periods set forth in (1) above to apartments legally renting for $2,000 or more a month without their becoming vacant if the total household income exceeds $175,000 in each of the prior two consecutive years. To be eligible for this second form of deregulation, the landlord must send an income certification form to the tenant between January 1 and May 1 and file it with and get the approval of DHCR.

RGB

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not rise, the RGB increased rents anyway, based on projections that costs *might* rise in the coming year. For example, in 1998, owners' costs rose only 0.1%, yet the board raised rents 2% for a one-year lease and 4% for two years, based on projections that owners' costs might rise sharply in 1999. They did not, rising a virtually invisible 0.03%, yet the RGB last year voted the same increases as in 1998.

So tenants have already paid for the somewhat higher costs owners claim this year, based on a temporary spike in fuel costs. Additionally, if history is any guide, landlords will continue to compensate for higher fuel costs by simply providing less heat, as they did in the 1970s. Indeed, the continuing decimation of the city's code-enforcement apparatus under the Giuliani administration ensures that owners will feel confident that they can get away with that.

To protest, tenants have planned a vigil at Gracie Mansion on June 13, and massive turnout at the RGB public hearing on June 15 and the final RGB vote on June 22. It remains to be seen whether Mayor Giuliani, who claims to be doing some soul-searching following a series of personal crises, will revisit his disastrous housing policies during the last year of his administration, starting by abolishing the punitive "poor tax."

Oil Prices: No Excuse for Rent Increase?

Even as the Rent Stabilization Association is clamoring for steep rent increases due to a temporary increase in fuel prices, they are telling their own members that prices have peaked.

In a handout entitled "Fuel for Thought," the RSA tells landlords that through its group purchasing power, "very low competitive prices for #2, #4 and #6 heating oil" can be obtained in buildings with "any size storage tank." The leaflet states that under this program, prices for #2 heating oil decreased 30% in three weeks last winter, from $1.52 a gallon on Feb. 1 to $1.07 on Feb. 20. For #4 oil, the price declined 19% in 10 days, from $1.14 on Feb. 10 to $0.92 on Feb. 20, and for #6 oil, the price fell 14% in the same period, from $1.00 to $0.86.

—Kenny Schaeffer

Rent Guidelines Board Hearing and Vote Schedule

Thursday, June 15
RGB Public Hearing on Proposed Rent Increases

Tenants should show up and testify in force!
(especially tenants who have been "poor taxed")

Great Hall at Cooper Union
7 East 7th Street (near Bowery), Manhattan
(N, R trains to 8th Street or 6 to Astor Place)
Testimony from 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m.
(You can reserve your time to testify by phone, or just show up) RGB: (212) 385-2834

Thursday, June 22
RGB Final Vote

Tenants should again show up in force!
Great Hall at Cooper Union
7 East 7th Street (near Bowery), Manhattan.
Vote will occur between 5 and 9 p.m.

Rent Increases No Cure for Abandonment

By Jenny Laurie

While New York City is in no danger of losing its low-income housing to abandonment any time soon, landlords continue to use "distressed housing" as a stalking horse in their demands for high rent increases from the entire universe of rent-stabilized tenants. Data over the last several years has shown landlords' income is higher than ever before, interest rates are lower than ever, lending terms are great, and most owners have been able to refinance for lower rates. The good economy has minimized the problem of buildings that are physically neglected and behind on their taxes and mortgage payments.

Celia Irvine, housing-policy analyst for Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, attempted to put the fear of abandonment to rest by addressing the Rent Guidelines Board's concerns about distressed housing in special, invited testimony in May.

The RGB's public and landlord members had dragged out the specter of the huge losses of housing stock that resulted from the tremendous abandonment of the 1970s—buildings that were taken over by the city and then slowly destroyed by neglect, leaving tens of thousands of tenants in low-income neighborhoods without housing. Irvine pointed out that there has been a very low level of both mortgage foreclosure and tax delinquency in recent years, thanks to both an improving economy and to better government enforcement.

When the city stopped "vesting" in 1993 (a practice in which it takes buildings from landlords when real-estate taxes have not been paid), it had no property-tax-enforcement policy to replace the threat of vesting for a couple of years. Once the city started several enforcement and assistance programs for troubled owners in 1996, landlords started paying back taxes to avoid losing their buildings to an ownership-transfer program.

Irvine explained that buildings with high maintenance cossts and low rental income won't be helped by higher rent increases. These buildings are occupied by very low-income tenants who, she pointed out, already pay high percentages of their income for rent.

The message from her testimony seemed to be that RGB members concerned about distressed housing would be most useful by lobbying the city, state, and federal governments for greater funding for rent subsidies, and low-interest loans and grants, maintenance, and financial-management education programs for owners. Also needed are changes in governmental tax and fee policies in order to help owners in low-income areas deal with high taxes, water and sewer charges, and spiking fuel costs.

DHCR

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surprising number of BMCC faculty, staff, and students also gave tenant testimony.

But perhaps the most articulate and scathing indictment of the proposed changes came from Ralph Carbone, a 16-year employee at the agency and president of District Council 37, Local 1359, which represents DHCR workers. "The process utilized appears deliberately designed to confuse and obfuscate," he testified. "The code as it currently exists is complicated and complex enough. The agency performed a gross disservice to the public by, in effect, attempting to bury the very pro-landlord amendments to this revised code."

A common theme echoed in nearly all the tenant testimonies was anger over the lack of notice of the hearing and lack of details on the substance of the proposed changes. They weren't posted on the DHCR Website until the day of the hearing, and copies were not available at the hearing (though the DHCR offered to mail them out to tenants at a later date!).

This contrasted sharply with landlord advocates, who showed up in relatively high numbers to praise the changes. An article in the May 28 *New York Times* quoted Joe Strasburg, president of the Rent Stabilization Association, as saying "For both owners and tenants, this codification is an extremely valuable and useful process." The fact that the leading landlord group gave such quick approval to 150 pages of DHCR legalese feeds speculation by tenant advocates of foul play.

To many who have watched the DHCR's "devolution" in recent years, the credit for this latest attack on tenant rights rests with one man: George Elmer Pataki.

"In the past, under the Democrats, DHCR operated as an agency that took rent regulations seriously, but tried not to enforce it so much as to drive away landlord campaign contributions," says Met Council board member Bill Rowen, a tenant advocate and assistant to the tenant attorneys. "After Pataki became governor in 1995, the pro-business (landlord) ideology changed the landscape: DHCR was changed first in its staffing. Pro-landlord attorneys and appointees replaced pro-tenant ones. Often overlooked is that rent examiners and attorneys who served successfully in their jobs under the Democrats were removed. Only then could Pataki control the agency. Incompetence was rewarded. Lack of knowledge of the laws became a virtue, especially if you were willing to function as the Pataki people wanted you to."

Next Steps: Tenants Must Move to Defeat Changes

Tenant attorneys will be filing lawsuits to stop the proposed DHCR changes to the Rent Stabilization Code. In the meantime, it is extremely important that tenants register their opposition with both the DHCR and the governor. Originally DHCR had scheduled to end the "public comment period" on May 30. However, during the last week of May, tenants managed to show a swell of opposition to the changes, including a phone and e-mail "blitz" of DHCR and

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DHCR

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Pataki initiated by Met Council. The public-comment period has since been extended to the first week in July. After this point the DHCR will claim to have sufficiently heard public opinion and decide on whether or not to proceed with their proposed changes. Please see the notice at right to see what you can do to stop these anti-tenant proposals from becoming permanent.

DHCR's Proposed Changes to the Rent Stabilization Code

Overcharges and Extra Charges

DHCR will not only force through the "four-year statute of limitations" on overcharge cases (which is now the subject of pending court decisions); it is further proposing that new tenants in recently deregulated units be given only 90 days in which to file an overcharge complaint. The DHCR knows very well that it often takes years for tenants to discover such overcharges.

Landlords will be able to make "surcharges" for virtually anything they want, (gas, electricity, cable and Internet installation, washing machines, etc.) without any regulation. In overcharge cases, the legal rent will no longer be determined by the rent registered with the DHCR, but by the "record" given by the landlord at the proceeding. That means whatever number the landlord can get away with lying about at the time.

Landlords will be allowed to charge as many 20% vacancy increases in a year as they can get away with. The Rent Stabilization Code currently prohibits landlords from charging more than one vacancy increase within a given RGB annual cycle (meaning that in cases where a tenant is evicted or leaves "mid-lease," the landlord can only charge the first incoming tenant a vacancy increase, not any subsequent tenants within the same year). DHCR is proposing that there be no limit on the number of vacancy increases a landlord can collect in a one-year period. This is an open invitation for landlords to commit fraud, rent-gouge and evict tenants.

Eviction

DHCR will make it easier for tenants to be evicted for the landlord's "personal use," extending this to include the in-laws of landlords. "Personal use" cases (under the current definition, which includes all of a landlord's extended "blood" relations) are already being used fraudulently, resulting in landlords not only evicting individual tenants but whole buildings.

Eviction based on "non-primary residence" will be made easier. The proposed changes suggest that a driver's license and registration be the main indicator of a person's primary residence (over the current larger body of evidence used such as voting records, tax records, insurance policies, time spent in the apartment, etc.). Additionally, it is proposed that legal subleases be used to indicate "non-primary residence." Again, "non-primary residency" cases are already used as a tool of harassment by landlords looking to displace long-term tenants.

MCIs

DHCR will now require tenants to hire engineers or architects to refute a landlord's fraudulent Major Capital Improvement charges. DHCR will require the same for tenants who try to file for decreases in rent due to violations in the apartment or building. Both of these are areas for which DHCR is responsible. DHCR is trying to wiggle out of its mission, while simultaneously giving a fair shake to only those tenants who can afford it. Landlords will be allowed to file MCI applications without providing full proof and records relating to the MCI. DHCR will no longer be required to send the full copy of the landlord's application to affected tenants. In reality they have been neglectful on this for a long time (in violation of their own regulations).

Services/Repairs

Landlords will be able to collect rent increases even when they do not provide basic services to tenants.

Landlords will be given more leeway in fraudulently accusing tenants of denying them access to apartments in repair proceedings. This means landlords will further avoid rent reductions when they violate the law. In instances where tenants do actually succeed in getting a rent reduction in these proceedings, the landlord will no longer be required to certify maintenance of these conditions, once the rent has been "restored."

Don't Let George Pataki Secretly Gut the Rent Stabilization Code

PHONE, FAX,E-MAIL and WRITE
George Pataki and the DHCR!

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Three points to make clear in your messages to Pataki and the DHCR.

1) The proposed changes are unacceptable and MUST NOT BECOME CODE!

2) Demand a 120-day extension to the "public comment period." The manner in which this is being done is a disgrace and is probably illegal (violating the N.Y. State Administrative Procedure Act regarding public input on changes of this nature). The DHCR has purposely kept these changes and the proceedings surrounding them "on the down low." The time allotted has not been enough for a small battery of tenant attorneys to fully analyze the changes. Therefore it is totally erroneous to expect the average rent-regulated tenant to know of, let alone react to, these proposed changes.

3) George Pataki will pay a price for these changes in his next race for Governor. He appoints the commissioner of the DHCR and essentially calls the shots. In his tenure Pataki has silently gutted the infrastructure of this agency. From budget cuts to the firing of competent hearing officers to changes in the regulations like these, Pataki has all but handed over this agency to the real-estate industry. Let him know he will pay a political price for this extremely political act.
For more information, updates or materials contact Met Council at (212) 693-0553, ext. #6

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

LOWER EAST SIDE
Cooper Square Committee
61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2nd Ave. & Bowery)
Tuesdays ..... 6:30 pm
Closed August, reopens September 5.

BENSONHURST TENANT COUNCIL
1708 West 10th St., Brooklyn, 718-372-2413
Monday-Thursday ..... 10 am-5 pm
Call for appointment.

CHELSEA COALITION ON HOUSING
Covers 14th St. to 30th St., 5th Ave. to the Hudson River.
322 W. 17th St. (basement), CH3-0544
Thursdays ..... 7:30 pm

GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side)
525 E. 6th St. (btwn. Aves. A & B) Lower East Side tenants only, 212-533-2541.

HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA
Covers 135th St. to 165th St. from Riverside Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave., 544 W. 157th St. (basement entrance).
Thursdays ..... 8:00 pm

LOWER MANHATTAN LOFT TENANTS
St. Margaret's Home, Pearl & Fulton Sts., 212-539-3538
Wednesdays ..... 5 pm-7 pm

VILLAGE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS
26 Perry St. (basement), 212-741-2994
Wednesdays ..... 6 pm-7:30 pm

WEST SIDE TENANTS UNION
200 W. 72nd St. Room 63; 212-595-1274
Tuesday & Thursday ..... 2-5 pm
Tuesday and Wednesday ... 6-7:45 pm

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL ON HOUSING

Met Council is a citywide tenant union.

Our phones are open to the public Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m.

We can briefly answer your questions, help you with organizing or refer you to other help.

212-693-0550

Join Met Council

Membership: Individual, $25 per year; Low-income, $15 per year; family (voluntary: 2 sharing an apartment), $30 per year. Supporting, $40 per year. Sustaining, min. of $100 per year (indicate amount of pledge). For affiliation of community or tenant organizations, large buildings, trade unions, etc. call 212-693-0550 for information. Mon., Wed. & Fri., 1:30-5:00 pm.

My apartment is ❑ controlled ❑ stabilized ❑ unregulated ❑ other_____

❑ I am interested in volunteering my time to Met Council. Please call me to schedule times and duties. I can ❑ counsel tenants, ❑ do office work, ❑ lobby public officials, ❑ attend rallies/protests.

Name

Address **Apt. No.**

City **State** **Zip**

Home Phone Number

Send your check or money order with this form to:
Metropolitan Council on Housing, 64 Fulton St., Rm. 401, NY, NY 10038