



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Interactive Rent Regulations Forum & Rally

[JOSÉ M. SERRANO](#) May 24, 2011

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(Albany, NY) With rent regulations that protect affordable housing for over 2.5 million tenants set to expire June 15th, Senate and Assembly Democrats joined with NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn and housing advocates at an interactive rent forum and rally highlighting the critical need to extend and strengthen rent regulation laws before time runs out.

Broadcast live over the Internet, via Twitter and Facebook, Senate and Assembly Democrats engaged housing advocates from across the state to stop the “tenant tax” and save their homes. Senate Democrats also launched an online petition drive dedicated to rent regulations.

Between 1994 and 2010, over 300,000 units of affordable housing were removed from rent regulation. Now over one million units of affordable housing face immediate and irreparable deregulation on June 15th if rent regulations are not extended and expanded.

Senator Adriano Espaillat (D-Manhattan/Bronx), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Housing Committee and main sponsor of the Omnibus Tenant Protection Bill (S2783-A) said, “Rent regulations expiring would spell disaster for millions of New Yorkers who would be squeezed out of their homes. That's why we are working so hard to communicate our sense of urgency on this critical issue and ensure that rent regulations are strengthened and extended immediately.”

Senate Democratic Leader John L. Sampson said, “To protect affordable housing for millions of New York tenants, we must stop the tenant tax and extend and strengthen rent regulations before time runs out. New York is suffering from an affordability crisis that will only get worse without an extension and expansion of rent regulations.”

New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said, “Currently, there are millions of New York City renters who are worried that if these rent laws aren't renewed the future of their home, their family's homes, will be in jeopardy. It's critical that this issue get addressed immediately in a way that supports New York City as a renter city. Right now, there are less affordable apartments for families. We need the legislature to help us keep affordable

housing in New York. If we could do it in the City Council, we would do it in a heartbeat, but the power rests with the State legislature and we need them to act immediately to renew and strengthen our rent laws.”

Senator José M. Serrano (D-Bronx/Manhattan) said, “With the clock ticking on rent regulations, we must do everything we can to pass pro-tenant legislation that will lift the veil of uncertainty affecting residents statewide. It is vital to the health of our community to pass housing policy that will not permit New Yorkers from low-income families to be pushed out of their homes. I look forward to working with my colleagues to reach this goal in the upcoming weeks, and providing much needed stability to the most vulnerable in our communities.”

Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) said, “In order to ensure that millions of hardworking low- and middle-income New Yorkers, living in rent regulated units, are able to remain in their homes, we must extend rent regulation laws and close the loopholes that have plagued this system for far too long. If these laws were allowed to expire it would deliver a double blow to our poorest seniors and to the disabled, because in losing rent regulation laws we would also lose the SCRIE and DRIE programs. We cannot allow the final negotiation of rent regulation to come down to the wire. There is simply too much at stake. We must act now.”

Senator Daniel Squadron (D-Brooklyn/Manhattan) said, “There are 23 days left to extend and expand rent regulations before New York faces a full-out crisis. Failure is not an option for the millions of tenants whose homes will be jeopardized if the laws expire. The rent laws are a fundamental part of what New York is today. We must extend and expand the laws before the June 15th deadline to protect tenants, and the entire city.”

Senator Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx) said, “In my district alone, there are almost 72,000 rent

regulated units and tens of thousands of families that are afraid they will lose their homes if rent regulation laws expire on June 15th. We have just 3 weeks to extend and strengthen these tenant protections. That's why it's critical to raise this issue in Albany, not only to those Senators who have rent regulated units in their district, but to the legislators who don't have rent regulated units in their districts, who aren't hearing directly from their constituents about this issue - to educate them about the catastrophic impact not extending these laws would have on my constituents and the people of the Bronx. It is important that all New Yorkers realize that if rent regulation laws expire, the destabilization of the housing market in the Bronx, New York City and the surrounding areas would have serious repercussions throughout the state."

Senator Bill Perkins (D-Harlem) said, "In my district 70,000 households are on the brink of losing their homes if rent regulation is not renewed. This catastrophe will have disastrous direct impacts on the families involved and a greater ripple effect on the even larger community that I represent... not to mention the millions of New Yorkers throughout the state. This cannot be allowed to happen. Tenants are mobilizing to prevent this from happening and calling on the legislature and the Governor especially to renew and reform the regulations and to stop the brinksmanship."

Senator Jose Peralta (D-Queens) said, "Stabilizing the stock of affordable housing and protecting tenants from unscrupulous landlords is especially important at a time when many families are having a particularly hard time making ends meet. As Democrats, we will not turn our backs on New York's Middle Class."

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D/I/WF-35th District) said, "The shortage of affordable housing in New York is at a crisis level, and with rent control laws just weeks away from expiring, we are facing an emergency situation where hundreds of thousands of New

Yorkers could be forced from their homes because they cannot afford the rent. I am glad that we are holding this online forum and rally so that we can continue to organize our efforts in this critical moment. It is absolutely essential that we strengthen rent regulations and tenant protections so that all New Yorkers can have an affordable place to live.”

Senator Joe Addabbo (D-Queens) said, "Raising rents on middle class and working poor families that are already reeling in this tough economy is like burdening them with a crushing tax that will drive New Yorkers from their homes. That's why I support this legislation strengthening rent control and other crucial regulations that protect tenants and stabilize communities across New York. We must protect seniors, veterans, and the disabled from losing the very roofs over their heads. I believe the state legislature must extend and enhance rent regulation, and protect the shrinking stock of affordable housing. Without rent regulation, average working people or those most vulnerable could be priced out of New York City."

Assemblymember Vito Lopez (D-Brooklyn), Chair of the Assembly’s Housing Committee said,

“I strongly support the passage of a comprehensive rent regulations bill to provide affordable housing to over 1 million tenants living in rent stabilized units. It is imperative that we continue rent stabilization laws with additional enhancements that will provide important protections and increase the quality of life for these tenants.”

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (D-Manhattan) said, “It is no surprise that hundreds of tenants from New York City, many from my district on the Upper West Side, took the trip up to Albany to advocate for the renewal and expansion of the rent laws. Millions of New York City residents rely on the rent laws to stay in their homes, and for many, the law's expiration

would mean being forced from their homes, and for some, even homelessness. For months, I have been working toward renewing and strengthening the rent laws, set to expire in just over 20 days. Recognizing the seriousness of this issue and the real impact it will have on the lives of everyday New York City residents, the Assembly passed an omnibus rent bill that would accomplish most of the most essential reforms. The ball is now in the court of the Senate Republicans, who are unable or perhaps unwilling to see the impact that a failure to renew the rent laws would have for average working families in New York. I am pleased that Governor Cuomo has signaled his willingness to work to renew and strengthen the rent laws, which he has called the foundation of a healthy middle class and a significant factor in our State's economic recovery. The Assembly has been, and will continue to work with him, to strengthen and renew the rent laws. It's time for the Senate Republicans to roll up their sleeves and get to work protecting the people whom they have taken office to protect."

Delsenia Glover, President of Gang Of Six & President of Lenox Terrace Association of Concerned Tenants said, "Unless vacancy destabilization is repealed, the rent stabilized tenants of Harlem will be forced out of our homes in the near future. we have already lost thousands of apartments to destabilization and our children and grandchildren cannot afford to live here. Landlords are suing tenants and harassing tenants to achieve vacancies. We are looking to Governor Cuomo and the legislature to stop this disaster now and to restore our rent laws to affordability."

Key Components of S2783-A/ Espaillat – A2674-A/ Lopez:

- * Repeals vacancy destabilization and re-regulates most of the apartments that have been lost through this loophole in the last two decades

- * Allows New York City and suburban municipalities to bring former Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings under rent stabilization

- * Reduces the statutory vacancy bonus from 20% to 10%
- * Reforms preferential rent loophole that enables landlords to increase stabilized rents by hundreds of dollars when tenants renew their leases
- * Reforms the provision that allows landlords to empty entire buildings by claiming they need more than one unit for themselves or their family members
- * Reforms the Major Capital Improvement (MCI) program by making rent surcharges temporary, ending when the landlord has recovered the cost of the improvement
- * Reforms the Individual Apartment Improvement (IAI) program by reducing the monthly rent increase from 1/40th to 1/60th of the cost of the improvement
- * Adjusts high-income deregulation thresholds to more accurately represent inflation
- * Repeals the Urstadt Law which would restore home rule powers over rent and eviction legislation to the City of New York