



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin Malavé Dilan

Senator Dilan Introduces Measure to Make Sabotage of Regulated Rentals a Criminal Act

MARTIN MALAVÉ DILAN April 14, 2014

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In response to the recent spate of rent regulated building owners intentionally destroying units in attempts to drive tenants out, Senator Martin Malavé Dilan (D-Bushwick) and Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol (D-North Brooklyn) have introduced new legislation making the practice a criminal act.

S. 6941 would expand tenant protections by establishing the crime of Sabotage of Rent Regulated Accommodations, a class D felony. Existing tenant protections prohibit the harassment of rent regulated tenants in an attempt to drive them out. However, the recent rise in intentional destruction of regulated units, and the severity of the damage, are well beyond the scope of current law.

“The sheer malice of intentionally sabotaging a rent regulated apartment is criminal and those who would do it need to be treated as such. Taking an axe to the electric and hot water of a complex, intentionally setting fires and compromising load-bearing walls, puts lives at risk,” said Senator Dilan.

While incidents of landlord sabotage have escalated in North Brooklyn, of the 51 municipalities statewide that have rent control, and the more than 1 million regulated apartments in New York City, landlords and owners largely abide by and thrive under rent regulation laws.

North Brooklyn's market boom has seen unprecedented rents in some areas, with increases as much as 15 percent. Landlords can legally deregulate units after rents exceed a \$2,500 threshold or the units become vacant. It's the latter that landlords who intentionally sabotage apartments and utilities are seeking. In some instances, once damaged, the buildings occupants are ordered to vacate by city officials.