



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Marisol Alcántara

Senator Marisol Alcántara Passes Bill to Freeze Rents Retroactively for Burdened Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

MICHAEL CARTER June 13, 2017

| ISSUE: **TENANTS' RIGHTS, HOMEOWNERS, SENIOR CITIZENS, PROTECTIONS FOR THE DISABLED**

Albany, NY - The New York State Senate passed legislation sponsored by Senator Marisol Alcántara (D-Manhattan) on Monday to close a loophole in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and the Disabled Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) laws. The bill, S5881B, amends the law so that the exemption is based on the applicant's date of eligibility rather than their application date.

"Every day, my office helps constituents access benefits like SCRIE and DRIE, many of whom had no idea they were eligible for such programs. Through this reform, seniors and individuals with disabilities will no longer be punished financially for ignorance of the benefits available to them, and more of our community members will be able to stay in the homes and communities they helped build," said Senator Marisol Alcántara.

Currently, seniors and individuals with disabilities who want to take advantage of this program can only receive benefits starting on the first day of the month after they submit their application. However, many New Yorkers remain unaware of the program or mistakenly think it does not apply to them, and may have been eligible for some time before filling out an application.

This legislation solves this problem by freezing rent upon application at the rate the individual was paying at their initial date of eligibility instead of the date of application. Within two years of the initial date of eligibility, seniors and individuals with disabilities would be able to apply for and receive a rent freeze at the rate at which they first became eligible. If an applicant's original date of eligibility occurred more than two years prior to the actual date of application, the recipient will be able to freeze their rent at the rate they were paying two years ago.

A report from the New York City Department of Finance found 61,319 households benefiting from the SCRIE/DRIE program.

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