



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Benjamin

## Harlem State Senator Fights Back For Tenants In Rent Controlled Apartments

BRIAN BENJAMIN November 21, 2017

| ISSUE: **AFFORDABLE HOUSING, RENT CONTROL, RENT REGULATION, HOUSING**



(New York, New York) – To help address the affordable housing crisis facing working families across New York, State Senator Brian A. Benjamin has introduced legislation that will preserve the affordability of rent controlled apartments.

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*Residents of rent controlled apartments, many of whom are seniors on fixed incomes, are coming to my office looking for a way to stay in their homes. The formula which determines their rent increase, which is sometimes as much as 7.5%, is not just confusing and outdated; it is unfair. If we are serious about keeping New York affordable, we cannot allow this to continue. I am proud to join Linda Rosenthal as the Senate sponsor of a bill that would end this unfair practice, and keep people who have contributed to a neighborhood in the neighborhood,” said Senator Benjamin.*

The bill, S6925, which was introduced in the New York State Assembly (A268) by Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, creates a parity between maximum rent increases in rent controlled and rent stabilized apartments, doing away with the current formula.

“At a time when rent stabilized tenants are receiving the lowest increases in history, rent controlled tenants are receiving the highest. In 2015, rent controlled tenants received an increase of 9.6% over two years. The same economic conditions and factors that exists for rent stabilized tenants exists also for rent controlled tenants – which has warranted a rent freeze for two consecutive years in 2015 and 2016, as well as 1% and 1.25 percent increases for one-year leases in 2017 and 2017, respectively. We call rent controlled tenants the forgotten rent regulated tenants, because they are comparatively, so few, elderly and more and more powerless,” said Delsenia Glover, Director of Education and Outreach for Tenants and Neighbors and the Alliance for Tenant Power. “My rent on my apartment where I live with my disabled daughter is 80 percent of my income. Excessive increases, plus a fuel charge of nearly \$200 per month have dramatically diminished my quality of life in my senior years. I live to pay rent! And some folks I’ve known over the years are eve less fortunate than I. They no longer have an apartment,” said Norma Schreier, a rent controlled tenant on the Upper West Side. “Something needs to be done for rent controlled tenants, and it needs to happen this year” she added.

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Benjamin, who represents Harlem, East Harlem, and the Upper West Side in the New York State Senate, has a background in affordable housing and frequently fought for tenant's rights as Chair of Community Board 10. He is also a co-sponsor of several other pro-tenant bills.

Two of the bills, S1593 (Serrano) and S3482 (Stewart-Cousins) relate to vacancy decontrol. Senator Serrano's bill prevents a landlord from being able to automatically increase the rent of a rent regulated apartment by 20% upon vacancy. Senator Stewart-Cousins' bill prevents landlords from automatically removing apartments from rent regulation when they are vacated and reach a monthly rent of \$2,700 or more. "Vacancy decontrol motivates landlords to oust tenants from their homes. When these apartments leave rent regulation, we never get them back," said Sue Susman, an Upper West Side activist who runs an email list on affordable housing.

A third bill, S6527 (Krueger), relates to preferential rents, and would only allow for a dramatic increase from a preferential rent to a maximum legal rent upon the vacancy of the apartment, protecting an essential part of our affordable housing stock.

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*These bills are part of a comprehensive strategy to combat gentrification and keep tenants in their homes," said Senator Benjamin. "With Democratic control of the State Senate, we could pass these bills on the first day of session. The only thing standing between tenants and their rights is the IDC and the Republican control of the State Senate they enable."*

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## 2017-S6925

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to the establishment of rent adjustments; repealer

October 20, 2017

In Senate Committee [Housing, Construction and Community Development](#)

Sponsored by [Brian Benjamin](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2017-S6527

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Prohibits an owner from adjusting the amount of preferential rent upon the renewal of a lease

May 31, 2017

In Senate Committee [Housing, Construction and Community Development](#)

Sponsored by [Liz Krueger](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2017-S1593

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to rent increases after vacancy of a housing accommodation; repealer

January 10, 2017

In Senate Committee [Housing, Construction and Community Development](#)

Sponsored by [Jose M. Serrano](#)

Do you support this bill?

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## 2017-S3482

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- Introduced
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  - - Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
  - Delivered to Governor
  - Signed By Governor
  -

Makes conforming technical changes to the New York City administrative code and the emergency tenant protection act relating to vacancy decontrol; repealer

January 23, 2017

In Senate Committee [Housing, Construction and Community Development](#)

Sponsored by [Andrea Stewart-Cousins](#)

Do you support this bill?