



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

Statement from State Senator Gustavo Rivera Addressing the Lead Paint Crisis and Major Systemic Capital Needs Faced By The New York City Housing Authority

GUSTAVO RIVERA November 27, 2017

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC HOUSING, HEALTH, NYCHA, LEAD PAINT, HOUSING FUNDING**

All threats to the health and well-being of the more than 600,000 residents of the 326 public housing developments operated by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) across the five boroughs are unacceptable. As the Ranking Member of the Senate Health Committee, as a New Yorker, and as the representative for 90 NYCHA buildings in my district, it is alarming that NYCHA not only neglected to inspect 55,000 units for lead paint, but also misrepresented its efforts to pass compliance.

While appointing an independent monitor to oversee NYCHA's activities is justifiable, particularly under the current circumstances, addressing the major systemic capital needs affecting a vast number of NYCHA buildings is the best and most responsible way to help NYCHA residents. Infrastructure neglect, due to decades of decreased funding, has caused pervasive mold, leaking fixtures and walls, recurrent heat and hot water outages, deficient appliances, warped flooring, chipping paint, cracked plaster, and failing ventilation systems in too many NYCHA units. Rehabilitating and retrofitting this critical housing stock should be at the core of our efforts and is the most urgent task. My office has assisted many NYCHA residents to address these issues, by holding NYCHA accountable and helping tenants have

their days in court to rectify unhealthy and hazardous repair needs. However, NYCHA will not be able to address the pervasive root causes and make lasting progress without proper funding.

With NYCHA suffering from a \$17 billion capital shortfall and with further federal budget cuts looming, I strongly believe that New York State needs to reevaluate its fiscal commitment to the Authority and adequately allocate funding in order for NYCHA to address these hazardous health conditions. The allocation of \$200 million in last year's budget while important, is not nearly enough to scratch the surface of the problem.

Therefore, I call on our State's Legislature to act on the Senate Democratic Conference's SFY 2017-2018 proposed budgetary recommendations for NYCHA asking for the following:

- * Add \$1.5B for a NYCHA 5-year capital program to address rehabilitation and reconstruction of its aging infrastructure and begin paying down its \$16B capital backlog. This program should aspire to be a dollar-to-dollar match between New York's City and State aid.

- * The state should immediately disburse any unspent funds appropriated in previous budgets.

The need to address hazardous health conditions and to increase accountability within the Authority does not end here. We will continue to closely monitor NYCHA's plans and progress to ensure that NYCHA residents are protected. The health and safety of my constituents will always be my first priority.