



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senator Gianaris Lauds City As They Launch Tenant Protection Ad Campaign And Website

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NEW YORK—Today, the de Blasio Administration launched a campaign to educate tenants on their new rights under the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019. The ads, designed by The Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants, give New York City renters the information they need to hold their landlords accountable. The ads will run from October 21st – December 15th and will be displayed in subways, bus shelters, small businesses, Staten

Island ferry terminals, community newspapers, Link kiosks, and online. The city's Public Engagement Unit will be going door to door to make sure tenants know about the new protections and how to advocate for themselves.

"The State Legislature passed some of the most progressive rent reforms we've seen in decades, but if New Yorkers don't know their rights, it will all be for nothing," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "This campaign will arm New Yorkers with the knowledge to fight harassment and stay in their homes."

"After years of displacement caused by rent laws that worked against them, New York's tenants finally have a seat at the table thanks to a new Senate that eagerly championed housing affordability in a historic session," said **Senate Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris**. "Our sweeping new laws provide the strongest tenant protections in decades and I am proud to have worked with grassroots organizers to deliver this historic progress. I am pleased the City is taking steps to ensure tenants are aware of their rights under the reforms we enacted."

"In order to fully benefit from the Home Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019, renters in New York City need to know about the protections they have and need to feel empowered to advocate for themselves. This campaign is designed to do just that," said **Jackie Bray, Director of the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants**.

Tenants across New York City won new protections this summer due to new State legislation. The new laws make it harder for landlords to evict tenants and strengthened protections for New Yorkers living in rent regulated apartments. These laws are enforced by the State's Division of Homes and Community Renewal (DHCR). These protections include protection from large security deposits, onerous application fees, limits on how rent can increase, and limits how much landlords can charge regulated tenants for building

improvements.

If you have questions about your rights or worry you are being illegally harassed you can find more information at the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants' new [website](#) or call 311.

"The State Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 was a historic triumph for New York renters and a once in a generation overhaul of rent regulation laws. We're committed to building on our partner's work; this reform is just the beginning of our tenant engagement and protection efforts," said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. "We're thrilled to partner with the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants to empower and educate tenants about their rights."

"Today marks an important step in the Administration's longstanding efforts to ensure New York City tenants are protected and can continue to call this city home," said **Mayor's Public Engagement Director Omar Khan**. "We are proud to partner with the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants to expand on our existing proactive outreach so tenants know their rights and can access the free City services that protect those rights. This kind of targeted proactive outreach, paired with the advertising campaign launching today, has a meaningful impact on the New Yorkers who are most at risk of facing abuse."

"This administration has worked tirelessly to push forward our goal of making New York the fairest big city, and the State's landmark legislation is a huge step in the right direction. Rent stabilization is one of the strongest tenant protection tools we have, and the reforms out of Albany make those tools even stronger," said **HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll**. "I thank the Mayor for leading the charge to connect New Yorkers to the resources they need to live and thrive in this city."

“Every New Yorker deserves a safe place to live, which is why protecting our city’s tenants from construction-related tenant harassment, through enhanced tenant protection plans and enforcement inspections, is a top priority at the Department,” said **Buildings Commissioner Melanie E. La Rocca**. “We applaud Mayor de Blasio for his continued leadership in helping to create powerful resources for those that call our city home. Public awareness campaigns like this are critical to making sure New Yorkers know their rights, and the resources available to them, when it comes to renting in our city.”

New protections for all tenants include:

Rent Increase Notice - Landlords are required to provide notice to tenants if they intend to raise rent more than five percent or if they do not intend to renew the lease.

Unlawful Eviction - Unlawful eviction occurs when a landlord evicts or attempts to evict a tenant without a warrant of eviction or other court order. Unlawful evictions are now a misdemeanor punishable by civil penalty fines of \$1,000-\$10,000 per violation.

Warrants and Stays of Evictions - After a judgement has been granted in Housing Court, a judge will issue an order indicating the day after which a city marshal may execute a warrant of eviction. The marshal must now serve a 14 day notice upon the tenant prior to execution of the warrant of eviction. The court may stay the issuance of a warrant for up to one year.

Reversing Evictions - Many tenants are evicted for non-payment of rent. Changes to the law make it easier for families to reverse eviction decisions for non-payment of rent if they are able to come up with the money before the city marshal arrives.

Apartment Application Fee - Application fees for an apartment are limited to fees for background checks and credit checks, and now cannot exceed \$20. The \$20 limitation applies to licensed real estate brokers and salespeople acting as an agent of the landlord, lessor, sub-

lessor or grantor.

Late Fees - Late fees can only be charged if rent is received more than five days after the due date established in the lease, and cannot exceed \$50 or five percent of the rent, whichever is less.

New protections for rent regulated tenants include:

Elimination of Vacancy Decontrol - Owners can no longer remove a unit from rent stabilization after a vacancy if the rent has reached a certain dollar threshold. Previously, owners could deregulate stabilized units and charge incoming tenants market rate once the unit became vacant if the rent amount reached \$2,774.76.

Elimination of Vacancy Bonus - Prior to June 14, 2019, owners of rent stabilized apartments were awarded up to a 20% bonus to the "legal" rent in between tenancies. Today that bonus has been eliminated.

Rent Increases are Based on the Current Rent You Pay - Today, rent increases with some very narrow exceptions - currently set by the Rent Guidelines Board at 1.5% for a one year lease and 2.5% for a two year lease - must be based on the preferential rent.

Limits on How Much Owners can Charge Tenants for Building Improvements – The new laws significantly limit the rent increases that can be charged for Major Capital Improvements (MCI) and Individual Apartment Improvements (IAI). Examples of MCIs include new boilers, and new roofs. Examples of IAIs include bathroom or kitchen renovations.

These are just several of the key changes in the new rent laws. To learn more: visit New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) or [NYC.gov/tenantprotection](https://nyc.gov/tenantprotection).

Tenants who are being harassed by their landlord can file a complaint by calling 311. Rent regulated tenants can also file a complaint with DHCR. To learn more about reporting tenant harassment, tenants can visit the resources page on [NYC.gov/tenantprotection](https://nyc.gov/tenantprotection).

Resources available to tenants include:

Legal Services - In 2017, New York City became the first city in the United States to implement a plan to ensure that every tenant facing eviction in housing court or public housing administrative proceedings can have access to legal services through the Universal Access to Counsel law signed that year. This initiative is run by the Human Resources Administration's Office of Civil Justice (OCJ), which provides anti-eviction legal services in Housing Court and in community offices through nonprofit law firms across the city. Learn more [here](#).

Home repairs - Tenants may file a complaint by calling 311, using TTY 212-504-4115, or by using 311 online. If a landlord does not make repairs, HPD and DOB will inspect your home, issue violations, and hire city contractors to make repairs if your landlord refuses to comply with HPD and DOB orders.

Housing Applications- Through the [Housing Ambassadors Program](#), HPD partners with community-based organizations throughout the city to help people prepare and apply for affordable housing. Housing Ambassadors provide information and assistance with the application process.

Rental Assistance- HRA can help New Yorkers connect to rental assistance programs like CityFHEPS, and other programs available through the State and Federal Government. To find out if you qualify, call NYC's Human Resources Administration info line at 718-557-1399 for more information.

The Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants is a core part of the City's strategy to confront the affordable housing crisis. This newly established office will work across City agencies to make existing anti-harassment and anti-displacement programs better, and create new strategies to root out abuse. The office was created on January 10, 2019 when Mayor Bill de Blasio signed into law Executive Order No. 39, establishing an office to coordinate the City's range of tenant protection efforts. Our first Director, Jackie Bray, started in May 2019.

The Mayor's Public Engagement Unit was created in 2015 to reimagine how government serves New Yorkers by proactively connecting community members to important public services and building lasting relationships. The Tenant Support Unit, one of several programs within PEU, proactively engages with and provides free assistance to New Yorkers who, for example, may be experiencing landlord harassment (i.e. lack of home or building maintenance) or are at risk of displacement.