



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Deputy Leader Gianaris Announces Senate Passes NYCHA Utility Accountability Act, Providing Rent Relief For Tenants Experiencing Outages

MICHAEL GIANARIS June 10, 2021

| ISSUE: **NYCHA UTILITY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT**, **PUBLIC HOUSING**, **NYCHA**, **UTILITIES**, **CON EDISON**



ALBANY – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris announced the Senate passed his NYCHA Utility Accountability Act, which pro-rates rent for NYCHA tenants who experience long-term water, gas, electric, and heat outages. The legislation was prompted by a three-month long gas outage experienced by tenants at Astoria Houses in Senator Gianaris’ district.

"Months-long utility outages are unacceptable for any New Yorker, whether in private or public housing," said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. "NYCHA residents should not be expected to pay full rent, which typically includes utilities, when they are not receiving the service. My proposal would ensure we treat all our neighbors with respect and create financial urgency for NYCHA to make needed repairs on a faster timeline. I am pleased the Senate is passing this legislation."

"I am proud to see that the NYCHA Utility Accountability Act has passed in the Senate championed by my colleague Senator Michael Gianaris. I commend the Senator and Deputy Majority Leader for his work and commitment to public housing residents. I will press forward for its passage in the Assembly. NYCHA anchors working class-families by facilitating access to critical social and community services – and our neighbors living in NYCHA housing deserve reliable utilities and elected public servants that will hold the agency to a high standard. This reimagining and reform to NYCHA through legislation is in direct alignment with a continued push for an \$80 million investment in NYCHA infrastructure at the federal level," said **Assembly Member Khaleel M. Anderson**, who carries the bill in the Assembly.

Senator Gianaris' NYCHA Utility Accountability Act would reduce a tenant's rent obligation in an amount prorated per day of utility outage by the greater of 10% of the tenant's actual rent or \$75 per month. Affected utilities include gas, heat, water, and electric service. In addition to providing relief for impacted tenants, this legislation would provide a financial incentive to fix service more quickly.

Senator Gianaris has been a longtime advocate of improving quality of life for NYCHA tenants. He has secured major funding for a job training program for NYCHA residents through a partnership with LaGuardia Community College and Urban Upbound. When NYCHA failed to successfully test for lead in Queensbridge Houses, Senator Gianaris went in

and performed tests himself and pushed for faster lead testing in these developments.

Claudia Coger, President of the Astoria Houses Tenants Association said "I am thrilled Senator Gianaris is passing this legislation and hears the voices of the residents and the tenant association leadership. Tenants at Astoria Houses, and throughout NYCHA, consistently wait too long for basic repairs and deserve just compensation. I look forward to the Assembly passing the legislation soon, as well."

Carol Wilkins, President of the Ravenswood Tenants Association said, "NYCHA tenants deserve safe, reliable housing just like everyone else. No one in private housing would expect or tolerate months, or years, long utility outages and that expectation should extend to public housing, as well. This accountability is the support residents and tenant leadership needs to ensure work is done expeditiously. I am pleased Senator Gianaris continues to champion public housing tenants."

Chris Hanway, Executive Director of the Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement said, "This legislation incentivizes NYCHA to make repairs in a timely manner - a long overdue need in public housing. I am extremely pleased and grateful Senator Gianaris wrote this bill and that the Senate is passing it at this time."

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S1603

-
- 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
-

Enacts the NYCHA utility accountability act

January 14, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Michael Gianaris

Do you support this bill?