



Association for
Neighborhood
& Housing
Development

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**Testimony Before the New York State Senate Finance Committee and
New York State Assembly Committee on Ways and Means:
Regarding the New York State Executive Budget for Housing, Fiscal Year 2020-2021**

February 5, 2020

Good Afternoon. My name is Emily Goldstein, and I am the Director of Organizing and Advocacy at Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development Inc. (ANHD). I would like to thank Committee Chairs Krueger, Weinstein, Kavanagh and Cymbrowitz for holding today's hearing on the housing-related proposals in the Governor's Fiscal Year 2021 Executive Budget.

About the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development

ANHD's mission is to advance equitable, flourishing neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. Founded in 1974, today, ANHD stands as one of the City's lead policy, advocacy, technical assistance and capacity-building organizations, representing 80+ neighborhood-based and city-wide nonprofit organizations with affordable housing and/or equitable economic development as a central component of their mission. We work in coalition with our member groups and partner organizations to support policies and programs that center justice, equity and opportunity for NYC's marginalized communities and neighborhoods. Our members have developed over 130,000 units of affordable housing in the past 35 years and directly operate over 30,000 units housing over 100,000 people, and we have successfully enacted laws on affordable housing development, tenant protections, small businesses, and industrial development.

First, we want to applaud this legislature for passing the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (HSTPA). This law will provide crucial protections for the 365,000 low-income households that live in NYC's rent regulated apartments. It also creates new tenants protections from harassment and displacement for the more than 3.36 million unregulated renters across the state. After decades of fighting in Albany and in communities across the state, the tenant movement along with the NYS legislature beat back the real estate industry by closing the loopholes that spurred the displacement of so many of our neighbors.

The strength of our rent regulation system is dependent on strong and consistent enforcement and timely processing. Given the significant expansion in rent regulation processes from HSTPA, we recommend an increase in the Office of Rent Administration's budget sufficient to fully enact and enforce the new law. It is our understanding that the budget increase ORA received in FY19 was to address the backlog in processing overcharges and tenant complaints, which remains an ongoing concern for tenants looking to ORA for resolution. In order to effectuate the changes in HSTPA, ORA needs additional staff, legal services, equipment and technological systems. Without a significant increase in ORA's budget they will not be able to successfully implement the HSTPA.

The TPU has done effective and impactful work with its existing resources, re-regulating nearly 80,000 units of housing, reaching significant settlements with landlords who have patterns of systemic tenant harassment. Given the size of the rent regulated housing stock in New York State and the expanded protections under HSTPA, TPU needs additional funding to continue its important work and increase its impact. ANHD recommends doubling TPU's budget to \$10 million, thus allowing it to expand its audits, investigations, and legal actions.



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ANHD supports “good cause” eviction legislation that will bring renters rights and protections to the millions of tenants that live in unregulated buildings, smaller buildings and in manufactured homes. Every tenant in New York deserves to live free from the fear of eviction – including not only formal legal evictions, but informal evictions due to a landlord’s decision not to renew the lease, or a sudden or extreme rent hike. Rent stabilized tenants benefit from the right to renew their leases, and from protections against unconscionable rent hikes. In addition to preventing displacement, such protections allow tenants to address dangerous or unhealthy conditions in their housing with less fear of retaliation. Good cause eviction would guarantee all New York renters, in non-owner occupied buildings, the right to renew the lease with regular annual rent increases.

ANHD supports the “Home Stability Support” program, a form of rental assistance for low-income families and individuals who are facing eviction, homelessness, or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous conditions. This would help bridge the difference between public assistance shelter allowance and fair market rents for those for people leaving the homeless shelter system or who are at risk of homelessness.

State funding is needed to address the critical infrastructure and capital needs in NYCHA and for public housing resident statewide. We must address the unacceptable living conditions millions of public housing residents face each day. ANHD recommends that the State Legislature must invest \$3 billion annually to fix and preserve public housing statewide, with \$2 billion directed to NYCHA.

ANHD also supports full funding for the Communities First Campaign. New York homeowners and their communities continue to struggle with the devastation caused by foreclosures. Communities First ensures that low- and moderate-income homeowners throughout the State of New York, in every county of New York state receive the vital housing counseling and legal services necessary to protect homeownership, prevent blight from vacant and abandoned homes, help municipalities avoid tax foreclosure, and build intergenerational wealth through homeownership. We support Communities First’s ask to continue the \$20 million in annual funding for homeowner services statewide.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. For if you have any questions or for more information please contact Emily Goldstein, at Emily.q@anhd.org.
