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**Testimony by State Senator Daniel Squadron at the New York City Board of Standards
and Appeals Public Hearing Regarding Calendar No. 96-11-BZ
December 6, 2011**

My name is Daniel Squadron and I represent the 25th Senate District in the New York State Senate. My district includes Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Vinegar Hill, DUMBO, Fulton Ferry, Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens and Gowanus in Brooklyn, and the neighborhoods of Tribeca, Battery Park City, the Lower East Side, Chinatown, the Financial District, Little Italy, SoHo and the East Village in Manhattan. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

I am strongly opposed to the application for a zoning variance sought here today. For over five years, residents and advocates have opposed vertical building enlargements of this kind. By granting this variance, the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) would set a precedent that would allow additional apartments to be built far in excess of what current zoning laws allow, violating Multiple Dwelling Law (MDL) regulations and posing a threat to the safety of residents.

The owner of 514-516 East 6th Street has also failed to comply with a condition of an earlier BSA decision to grant MDL variances. In September 2009, BSA ruled in favor of the owner to grant waivers that would allow the 6th floor enlargement to remain, but required the removal of the 7th floor by February 3, 2011. Over two years later, the removal of the 7th floor has still not occurred. This non-compliance is not acceptable.

Granting today's request could also lead to a permanent change to the original height of the tenement buildings on East 6th Street, putting the buildings out of context with their neighbors and altering the feel of an historic neighborhood. According to Section 72-21 of the Zoning Resolution, one of the key findings that must be adhered to is that a request for a zoning variance, if granted, "will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood."

Due to the imperative to protect the safety of residents, the previous non-compliance of the owner, and the need to maintain the character of the neighborhood, I urge the BSA to refuse this request for a zoning variance.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify today.