

MICHAEL G. GRIMM
11TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

ASSISTANT WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3211

512 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3371

265 NEW DORP LANE, 2ND FLOOR
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10306
(718) 351-1062

7308 13TH AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NY 11228
(718) 630-5277

June 19, 2014

Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We are writing to you in regards to "illegal home conversions" that are and have been for years taking place in our residential communities. Specifically, in our districts, the neighborhoods of Dyker Heights and Bay Ridge have been experiencing such illegal conversions of one and two family homes at an alarming rate.

The typical conversion transforms a private home once housing one to two families and converts it into a virtual SRO with occupancy several times what is legally permissible. This transformation takes place in the form of an alteration to the interior of the premises which goes beyond your typical renovation but includes major construction including extensive excavation, total reconfiguration of the interior as well as the sealing up of windows and door openings limiting points of egress.

This type of activity is not only in opposition to proper building code but also in violation of the legal zoning laws. Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights underwent an extensive down zoning in order to curb legal construction that was causing an increase in density that could not be supported by the community. These illegal conversions are not only unsafe but they are a drain on our city services such as fire, police, sanitation and education and will alter the character of the community.

This activity is of grave concern to us. Not only does it have a detrimental effect on the neighboring residents but it also proves to be extremely dangerous. These buildings are not safe for the number of people they are housing. The transient occupants of these dwellings are poor and living in substandard conditions, largely dependent upon owners who are taking advantage of them and illegally making hundreds of thousands of dollars off their misfortune. Do we need to wait until there is a major fire or other disaster that results in a loss of life before we act?

At this time, we are requesting a meeting with the Commissioners of all the city agencies with overlapping jurisdiction as well as a high ranking official of the Mayor's office so that we may begin to address this important matter in a comprehensive way. We invite our colleagues in elective office on the local and state level to join in this meeting.

Sincerely,



Michael G. Grimm
Member of Congress



Martin J. Golden
State Senator