



# ALBANY PULSE

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## SENATOR MONTGOMERY WORKS TO RENEW AND STRENGTHEN TENANT PROTECTIONS

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With rent regulation laws that protect over one million units of affordable housing in New York City and the surrounding counties dangerously close to expiring, Senator Velmanette Montgomery has called for the immediate extension and expansion of tenant protection laws.

To prevent the expiration of rent regulations and the most significant "tenant tax" in the history of New York, which could force over a million New Yorkers from their homes, Senator Montgomery advocates that the omnibus tenant protection bill (S.2783-A) be included in the 2011-12 State Budget. **The laws governing rent regulation are set to expire on June 15, 2011.**

### The key components of S.2783-A are:

- Repeals vacancy destablization and re-regulates most of the apartments that have been lost through this loophole in the last two decades.
  - Allows New York City and suburban municipalities to bring former Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings under rent stabilization.
  - Reduces the statutory vacancy bonus from 20% to 10%.
  - Reforms preferential rent loophole that enables landlords to increase stabilized rents by hundreds of dollars when tenants renew their leases.
  - Reforms the provision that allows landlords to empty entire buildings by claiming they need

more than one unit for themselves or their family members.

- Reforms the Major Capital Improvement (MCI) program by making rent surcharges temporary and which end when the landlord has recovered the cost of the improvement.
- Reforms the Individual Apartment Improvement (IAI) program by reducing the monthly rent increase from 1/40 to 1/60 of the cost of the improvement.
- Adjusts high-income deregulation thresholds to more accurately represent inflation.
- Repeals the Urstadt Law which would restore home rule powers over rent and eviction legislation to the City of New York.

New York State's rent regulation system enables more than 2.5 million people -- the vast majority of whom are moderate, or low-income -- to live in safe and affordable housing. Rent regulation helps counteract the destabilizing effects of the abnormal market conditions in New York City, where the housing shortages are so severe that the vacancy rate for rental housing is less than three percent.

Critical reforms that are necessary to preserve rent regulation over the long term include repeal of vacancy decontrol, the reform the Individual Apartment Improvement (IAI) and the Major Capital Improvement (MCI) systems, and the return of local control over rent regulated housing.



Representatives of PRATT, Neighbors Helping Neighbors and the Fifth Avenue Committee met with Senator Montgomery to thank her for her support of tenant protection laws and all of her work to preserve affordable rental housing.



Senator Montgomery honored **Dr. Frances Fox Piven** upon the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the publication of *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, a book on social policy in the United States. The Senator is joined by Senator Gustavo Rivera and Senator Bill Perkins.