



# NEWSBEAT..

Newsletter from the Office of  
**Senator Bill Perkins**

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New York's rent protection laws expire tomorrow – Wednesday, June 15, 2011. The Governor and Legislature must take steps to protect renters and preserve our shrinking supply of affordable housing. To do this, it is not enough to renew the laws – they must be strengthened as part of the renewal. Yesterday I continued to show my unwavering support for tenants by joining them at the real rent reform rally in Albany. Many advocates, including myself, were arrested by the state police for disorderly conduct while protesting outside the Governor's office. The issue of real rent reform is not new, it had been around for decades, and reform of the rent laws is of vital importance for all tenants.

Since 1993, Republicans in Albany have seriously weakened our rent laws, including something called Vacancy Destabilization which lets landlords take apartments out of the rent regulation system when tenants move, die or get evicted. As a result, we have lost more than 300,000 affordable apartments.

Half the renting families in New York City have a median annual household income of less than \$36,200, so once an apartment is destabilized it is unaffordable for working and middle class New Yorkers. And the tenants who move into these apartments have no basic rights.

Republicans in Albany got millions in campaign money from landlords last year. They are trying to force the Democrats to let the laws expire completely, or to pass a bad bill that hurts tenants. The Republicans succeeded in forcing through anti-tenant amendments the last three times the laws came up for renewal in the State Legislature.

But things are different this year. Our Democratic Governor, Andrew Cuomo, has joined Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and virtually every Democratic legislator in calling for stronger rent laws. And with over a million homes at risk, we have tremendous momentum on our side.

Again, the rent laws have been so weakened that just renewing them is not enough. Vacancy Destabilization will continue to eliminate affordable apartments until the entire program is gone.

Governor Cuomo holds the key in this fight. He must show real leadership and work with the Democrats to force the Senate Republicans to accept fairer rent laws.

To win, the Governor must be more aggressive. He needs to make it clear that stronger rent protections is at the top of his must-do list for what's left of the 2011 legislative session. He needs to be more visible, and more vocal – and he needs to tell us WHICH specific reforms he supports. So far, he has spoken only in generalities.

The future of New York City for working families hangs in the balance. With affordable rental housing disappearing, the housing crisis has grown worse over 20 years. The time for rent reform is now. And the key to reform is Governor Andrew Cuomo.

