



January 7, 2022

RE: 2022 Joint Budget Hearing on Housing of the NYS Legislature

Testimony of the Community Housing Improvement Program

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, my name is Joseph Condon. I submit this testimony on behalf of the Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP).
Good afternoon,

CHIP is a housing advocacy organization; our members are the owners and operators of small- and mid-size rental buildings throughout the five-boroughs. Their buildings are mostly rent-stabilized, and most CHIP members have owned and operated their buildings for decades. They are generational owners, many of them have generational tenants, and they have become part of the communities in which they provide housing. These are long term holders of property. They are housing providers, not housing speculators. CHIP members are hands on operators – they know their tenants, they want their tenants to be happy, because they want to provide quality housing and excellent services. Our members are not in the business of evicting tenants, nor are any housing providers.

While the members of our organization are the owners and operators of rental housing, we consider ourselves to be true housing advocates because we want housing policy that works for everyone. We advocate for policies that lead to a better marketplace for housing options for all. We want real solutions for the tenants who can't pay their rent, not programs based on political talking points that don't address the real issues.

The first and only point we would like to make at this hearing is that the overriding concern for renters and housing providers is the large amount of rental arrears that have been accrued over the last two years. Renters are facing housing insecurity because of these rent arrears. As are housing providers. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) has helped many

families quell this concern, but there are approximately 135,000 applications for rent assistance which cannot be paid out unless there is another \$1.7 - \$2 billion in funding allocated to the program. And that number continues to grow as the application portal remains open.

And it will continue to grow. Although the ERAP program has provided significant relief to many, there are still many renters who have not been able to access the program. Based on a survey of our membership, there are about 175,000 additional renters with rent arrears who could have applied but did not. Based on the average payout for ERAP recipients of \$12,500, this would require an additional \$2.2 billion. We believe this mountain of tenant debt and inability to pay future rent should be the priority for this body, and for the state budget negotiations.

While the amount of rental arrears is significant, the long-term benefits of providing that relief is even greater.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.