



My name is Brahvan Ranga, and I am the Political Director at For the Many. I submit this testimony to urge the State Legislature to include Good Cause Eviction (S305/A4454) and the Housing Access Voucher Program (S568A/A4021) in the state budget, and to move to pass the larger [Our Homes, Our Power](#) package proposed by the Housing Justice for All Coalition, of which For the Many is a steering committee member.

[For the Many](#) is a grassroots social justice organization based in the Hudson Valley. We organize in rural, suburban, and small-city upstate New York. We're building a movement of everyday people - across race, age, and language - to fight for laws and win elections that bring us closer to a New York that works for all of us, not just the greedy few. . We organize the multiracial working class and conduct our work in English and Spanish, and fight to win laws and elections both locally and statewide. Our organization started in 2012 as an all-volunteer group of everyday people meeting in a church basement to fight against evictions and foreclosures. Ever since then, housing has been one of our core focuses. We joined [the Housing Justice for All](#) coalition, a statewide movement of tenants and homeless New Yorkers united in our fight for housing as a human right, in order to work with other grassroots group across New York to push for transformative statewide legislation.

These past two years, we have [helped lead the statewide fight for Good Cause Eviction](#), along with partner organizations in the Housing Justice for All coalition and tenants across the state. Our fight is a response to the scale of the housing crisis in the Hudson Valley - According to American Community Survey Data - 57% of renters in the Mid-Hudson Valley are rent-burdened, meaning they pay more than a third of their income in rent. This issue is particularly pronounced among Black and Brown people, immigrants, and other marginalized groups - who are disproportionately in renting households. What's more, the tenants in Upstate NY have virtually no eviction protections whatsoever, along with 1.6 million households statewide - roughly half of the state's renters.

The pandemic and its effects have only accelerated this crisis, and since the eviction moratorium expired early last year, we have seen a surge in both eviction cases, and the fear and instability that the threat of eviction brings upon working-class families. We work with people every day who are being forced from their homes due to high prices, or



have to endure intolerable conditions because they're too afraid of retaliation from their landlords.

The single most important step that the legislature could take to address this crisis would be passing Good Cause Eviction. It would protect tenants from unreasonable rent hikes and retaliatory or discriminatory evictions. It would give tenants more control over their housing, empowering them to ask for better conditions, and ensuring that they feel secure in their homes. It would slow gentrification and real estate speculation. It would still allow landlords to make a profit, and evict tenants if they have a good reason.

After the state legislature repeatedly failed to pass Good Cause last year, we worked with our allies and local lawmakers to pass Good Cause Eviction protections in Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, Kingston, and Beacon. This came after months of drafting legislation, facilitating community meetings, directing folks to call their elected officials, and mobilizing to city council meetings. Throughout the course of the campaign, hundreds of tenants stood up to their landlords, risking retaliation, and demanded that their local governments take action. I was present when all four of these local city councils passed Good Cause legislation - and the sense of hope and solidarity in those in those rooms was palpable.

However, those hard-fought protections are under threat from lawsuit. The City of [Newburgh's Good Cause Eviction law was overturned](#) on preemption grounds. The Court said that only the state has the authority to pass Good Cause Eviction. That is why I am calling on the state legislature to include Good Cause Eviction and the Housing Access Voucher Program in the one-house budgets, and demand their inclusion in the final budget proposal. Moving forward, the legislature must act to pass the rest of the [Our Homes, Our Power](#) package. The Governor has signaled that housing is a priority this session - and so we have a precious opportunity to act, not only to build new housing, but to prevent displacement for millions of New Yorkers, and create a housing system that enshrines housing as a human right.