



ADVANCING OUR COMMUNITY

Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. Testimony at the New York State Senate Joint Hearing on the Good Cause Eviction Proposal January 7th, 2022

My name is Carlyn Cowen and I am the Chief Policy and Public Affairs Officer at the Chinese-American Planning Council. The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community-based organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded since our founding to include 3 key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social services organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 60,000 people per year through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families.

We urge the State legislature to pass the Good Cause Eviction bill (S3082) which would protect tenants from unjust evictions and from predatory rent hikes. It is more crucial than ever to ensure that this bill passes as the eviction moratorium is about to end. We cannot risk nor allow our fellow New Yorkers to face homelessness in the midst of the Omicron variant surge. In order to combat this health crisis, we need to make sure that people are allowed to stay in their homes without fear of eviction. No New Yorker should lose their home or livelihood, especially while they are working together to flatten the curve and keep New York safe.

CPC has been conducting wellness surveys with our community members since the start of our pandemic. By September 2020, 50% of our community members had reported losing jobs or income. By March 2021, 70% of our community members had reported losing jobs or income. Community members have fallen behind on rent, have been threatened by landlords, and have been illegally evicted. It is an urgent public health and economic stability issue that New York State pass the Good Cause Eviction Bill.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the urgency for affordable housing and an increase of protections for tenants. Our community members are facing momentous challenges with AAPI unemployment increasing over 7000% and record food insecurity. As a result, many are unable to afford a roof over their heads. Despite the enacted eviction moratoriums, many landlords have continued to precede with evictions placing families at risk for the virus. In fact, according to a [report](#) released by the Coalition for the Homeless, they found that "through the end of February 2021, the age-adjusted mortality rate due to COVID-19 for sheltered homeless New Yorkers was 463 deaths per 100,000 people—49 percent higher than the citywide rate of 292 deaths per 100,000 people." Congregate shelters have had and continue to have difficulty



implementing social distancing due to high demand which indicates why there have been huge spikes in COVID cases within these areas.

Furthermore, we serve a large immigrant population and it is crucial that we acknowledge that immigrant New Yorkers face disproportionate housing barriers, even prior to COVID-19.

Immigrants are more likely to be increasingly rent-burdened, live in overcrowded spaces, and live in substandard conditions that don't receive regular maintenance. First generation immigrants are more likely to be low income and significantly rent-burdened (more than 50% of income for rent) than second generation immigrants, at 19-35%. AAPI immigrants are also more likely to live in multi-generational households, which are more prone to crowding. Additionally, AAPI immigrants face significant language barriers and access to public housing and assisted living. In combination with the long waiting lists of NYCHA and Section-8 Housing, AAPI immigrants are left with fewer opportunities to find truly affordable housing. Immediate action needs to be taken in order for our communities to not only be protected from this virus but to feel empowered to live a dignified life.

Now is the time for the State legislature to pass the Good Cause Eviction Bill as this is needed for the short-term as well as long-term recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

CPC appreciates the opportunity to testify on these issues that so greatly impact the communities we serve, and look forward to working with you on them. If you have any questions, please contact Carlyn Cowen at ccowen@cpc-nyc.org