

Good afternoon. My name is Elise Levy and I am a Tenant Organizer and Advocate with Housing Conservation Coordinators. In our catchment area, Manhattan's West Side, we have an incredibly high concentration of 421-a units. Our neighborhood is essentially a case study of the remarkable failure of this program.

In our work with residents of the affordable housing units in these buildings, we see the same issues repeated over and over. Tenants are experiencing unequal treatment, receiving misinformation, and being harassed. An extremely common issue that we see is tenants receiving misleading lease riders that lead them to believe their protections are expiring, which causes people to self-evict. We urge the legislature to pass legislation that will fine landlords for providing such misinformation. We also demand that all existing affordable units in 421-a buildings remain rent-stabilized in perpetuity. If the legislature does not take action, we expect to see thousands of tenants self-evicting or being forced to move out just over the next few years as these programs continue to expire. We need real, permanent affordable housing where people do not have to worry if the affordability of their unit will expire.

Further, we demand an end to this program as a whole. There is no reason to renew 421-a. It is simply a handout for developers. We need to invest in real, permanent affordable housing, instead of wasting billions of dollars on a program that primarily benefits landlords. We demand that the legislature reform the program to protect existing tenants and not renew the program moving forward. Further, we demand that the legislature pass good cause eviction to keep the housing we have affordable and allow people to remain in their homes!