

The Right to Remain

A case for full coverage in good cause eviction protections

BY LENA AFRIDI,
OKSANA MIRONOVA,
AND SAMUEL STEIN

The Pratt Center for Community Development and the Community Service Society of New York (CSS) support good cause eviction protection (S3082/A5573), which would expand the fundamental right to a lease renewal to the vast majority of tenants in the state. A state-wide Good Cause law can work with existing tenant laws and housing subsidy programs to create the conditions for more tenants to organize in their buildings (including buildings with mixed rent-regulated and unregulated apartments). Good Cause can also help limit speculation in rental buildings not covered by rent stabilization. Municipalities across the state, including Kingston, Newburgh, and

Poughkeepsie have already passed local good cause legislation. California and Oregon passed their own versions of the law, called Just Cause, in 2021 and 2019, respectively. With a potential mass eviction crisis on the horizon, New York State should follow suit with full coverage Good Cause eviction protections.

To work as effectively as possible, Good Cause must have broad coverage.

Means-testing or geographic carve-outs will shift market pressure onto excluded units or create an incentive for discriminatory practices in tenant selection.

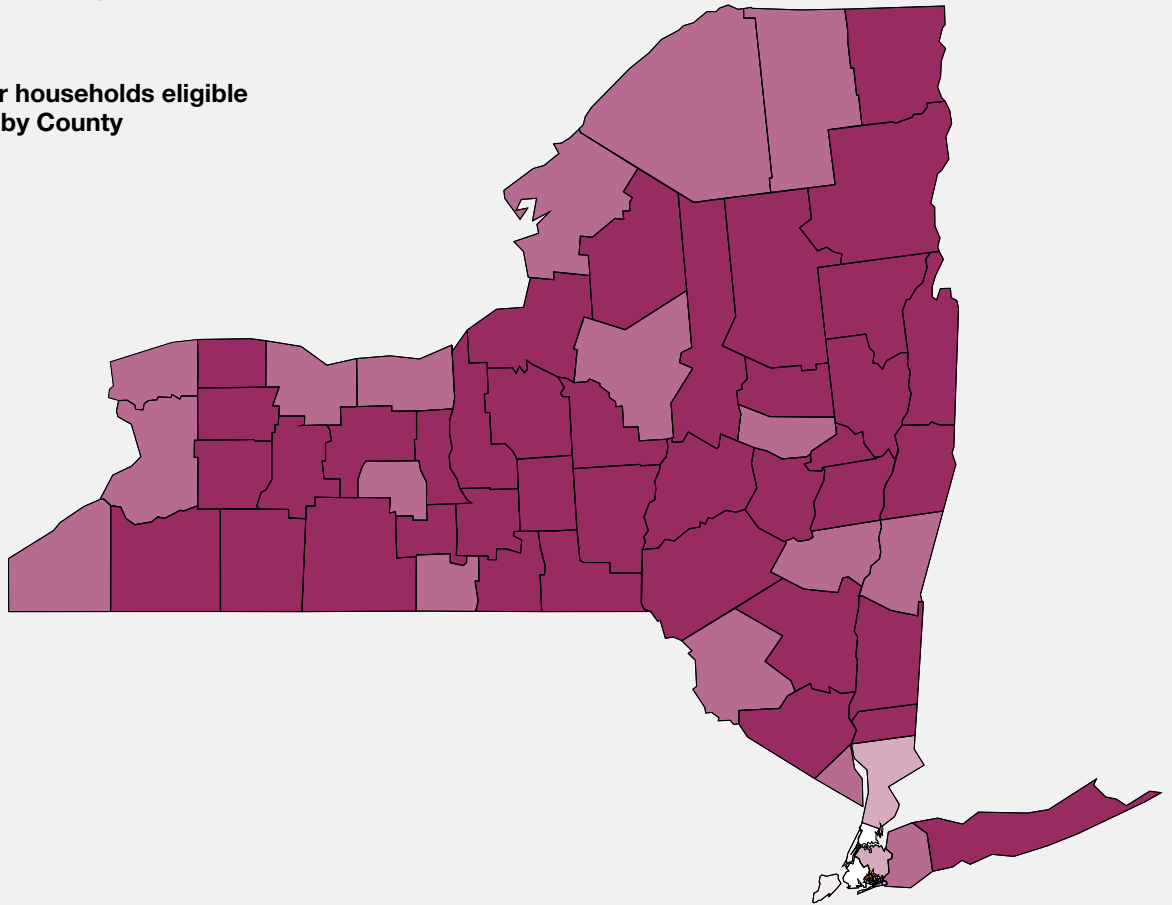
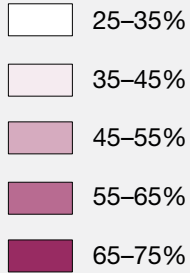
Good Cause would protect 1.6 million households, nearly half of tenants state-wide, including:

Over 70% of tenants in	Tompkins County	where the median income is \$63K
	Broome	\$52K
Over 60%	Albany	\$66K
	Monroe	\$60K
	Erie	\$58K
	Sullivan	\$57K
Over 40%	Queens	\$68K
	Richmond	\$82K

Statewide median income: \$68K

Good Cause Eligibility in New York

Percent of renter households eligible for Good Cause by County



Albany	67%	Franklin	62%	Oneida	61%	Seneca	68%
Allegany	71%	Fulton	66%	Onondaga	67%	St Lawrence	63%
Bronx	25%	Genesee	66%	Ontario	67%	Steuben	67%
Broome	71%	Greene	65%	Orange	67%	Suffolk	71%
Cattaraugus	70%	Hamilton	71%	Orleans	71%	Sullivan	59%
Cayuga	65%	Herkimer	66%	Oswego	69%	Tioga	73%
Chautauqua	64%	Jefferson	64%	Otsego	74%	Tompkins	73%
Chemung	61%	Kings	34%	Putnam	67%	Ulster	66%
Chenango	72%	Lewis	71%	Queens	45%	Warren	67%
Clinton	71%	Livingston	70%	Rensselaer	72%	Washington	70%
Columbia	65%	Madison	70%	Richmond	43%	Wayne	61%
Cortland	67%	Monroe	62%	Rockland	61%	Westchester	52%
Delaware	71%	Montgomery	61%	Saratoga	73%	Wyoming	66%
Dutchess	68%	Nassau	61%	Schenectady	68%	Yates	55%
Erie	64%	New York	42%	Schoharie	75%		
Essex	70%	Niagra	62%	Schuyler	69%		

For example, high-rent thresholds would encourage landlords to drive up rents, repeating the dynamic created by the introduction of vacancy decontrol to New York State's rent stabilization system, which contributed to the deregulation of nearly 291,000 apartments. When the vacancy decontrol loophole was introduced by the New York City Council in 1994, Housing Committee chair Archie Spigner noted that the average apartment in the city was under \$600 (\$1,125 in 2021 dollars), and that the likelihood of rents in New York reaching \$2,000 was "rather remote." In November 2021, median asking rents for 2-bedroom apartments on Streeteasy were above \$2,000 in 96 percent of New York City neighborhoods.

Similarly, high-income carve-outs could incentivize landlords to select wealthier applicants for vacant apartments, even if a larger number of qualified lower-income tenants applied for the same units. However, good cause eviction protects tenants across the state, the majority of whom live in counties with a median income at or lower than the state median income of \$68,486.

Many high-cost rentals house multiple families and multigenerational households

The vast majority of unregulated tenants in the state live in units that rent under \$3K a month. About 5 percent (172,000 units), however, rent for more than \$3,000. Eighty-six percent of high-priced units are located in Manhattan or Brooklyn. Five percent are in Queens, and the remainder are in the Bronx, Nassau, Suffolk, and Rockland counties.

While some residents of high-cost units are high-income renters, a significant proportion

are multi-generational households, in which multiple workers often share responsibility for covering the rent. In Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland, and Bronx counties, half the residents of high-cost rentals are multi-generational households. In Queens, the proportion is one in three households, and in Brooklyn it's one in five.

Many of these households are immigrant families. Forty percent of high-cost renter households in Queens speak a language other than English at home, as do more than 34 percent in Nassau, 36 percent in Suffolk, 25 percent in Manhattan, and 21 percent in Brooklyn.

In some parts of the state, high-cost rentals are paid for by multiple households sharing the same apartments. Nearly one in five tenant households in Manhattan and nearly one in three in Brooklyn include more than one family.

Pratt Center and CSS recommend that the state legislature pass Good Cause with as much and as broad coverage as possible, in order to ensure the program is truly impactful and effective. Means testing and carve-outs create incentives for landlords to prioritize higher income individuals as tenants, while leaving those households that need eviction protection without necessary protections. Those who stand to benefit most from Good Cause protection are low- and moderate-income tenants, immigrant tenants, and multi-generational households.

DATA SOURCES

IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.
American Community Survey 2019 (5-year) data
New York State Homes and Community Renewal
Furman Center Core Data
2017 NYC Housing Vacancy Survey

Founded in 1963, the Pratt Center for Community Development works for a more just, equitable, and sustainable city for all New Yorkers. As part of Pratt Institute, we leverage professional skills including participatory planning, community organizing, and public policy advocacy to support community-based organizations in their efforts to challenge systemic inequities and advance sustainable development.

The Community Service Society of New York (CSS) is an informed, independent, and unwavering voice for positive action on behalf of more than 3 million low-income New Yorkers. CSS draws on a 175-year history of excellence in addressing the root causes of economic disparity through research, advocacy, litigation, and innovative program models that strengthen and benefit all New Yorkers.



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