

Friday, January 7, 2022

New York State Joint Senate Hearing on Good Cause Eviction (S3082/Salazar)

Testimony of Raquel Namuche, Tenants Political Action Committee; raquelnamuche@gmail.com

My name is Raquel Namuche and I'm on the board of the Tenants Political Action Committee and I am also a long-time tenant organizer. I am also a rent-stabilized tenant living in Ridgewood, Queens and in this geographic area of our borough we have thousands of tenants who could greatly benefit from some of the protections that tenants such as myself currently have. Two main protections are limited rent increases and protections against unfair evictions, which are rights that should be granted to every tenant in this state.

In senate district 15 alone, there are 38,000 unregulated rental apartments. This district is represented by Senator Joseph Addabbo, who has failed to co-sponsor this crucial legislation. The Good Cause bill is being misrepresented by the landlord and real estate lobby, and perhaps this is why legislators like Senator Addabbo have failed to co-sponsor. This bill will not subject all housing to rent control. This bill will not take away the control a landlord has over their property. This bill will not cause landlords to sell their properties or leave New York.

What this bill does is it simply gives unregulated tenants that fall under the purview of this legislation a bare minimum and very basic set of standards that they can use to defend themselves in housing court if their landlord has brought an eviction case against them. Right now, unregulated tenants can be brought to housing court for no good reason at all--if a landlord no longer wants a tenant in their apartment, all they have to do is tell that tenant to leave or bring a case and if a tenant decides to fight their case in housing court, they don't currently have any strong legal defenses to respond to an unjust eviction proceeding.

The Queens real estate market has recovered to pre-pandemic levels even though tenants are still living with many unprecedented challenges. We need to extend the eviction moratorium, put an end to winter evictions, expand right to counsel throughout the state and most importantly, tenants need good cause eviction protections now.