



# Tenant Inquilino

Housing for people, not profit

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Metropolitan Council on Housing  
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PERIODICAL



## Angry Tenants Blow Whistles on RGB 'Farce' But Board Slams Renters with \$45 Minimum

By Steven Wishnia

**W**ith their voices drowned out by the screeching whistles of protesters, the city Rent Guidelines Board on June 19 socked tenants with the largest rent increases since 1989.

The board voted 5-4 to allow increases of up to 4.5 percent on a one-year lease and 8.5 percent on a two-year lease. Tenants who pay less than \$1,000 a month and have been living in the same apartment for more than six years will get hit harder: The board voted a \$45 minimum increase on a one-year lease and \$85 for two years. As usual, the RGB's five Bloomberg-appointed public members all voted for the increases.

Over the last few years, tenants twisted in the wringer of stagnant wages and skyrocketing rents have grown increasingly weary of the RGB's repeated imposition of rent increases, almost always passed without a word from the public members. The public members are supposed to be neutral—the board has two landlord and two tenant representatives—but when one public member voted for a rent freeze in 2005, Mayor Bloomberg fired him.

"Welcome to the sham," Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer said at a rally before the meeting, at Cooper Union. City Council Speaker Christine Quinn called the RGB a "rubber stamp for rent increases."

Anger rose when the board voted 7-2 against tenant representative Adriene Holder's attempt to block the minimum increases. When landlord representative Steven Schleider began to speak, screeching whistles drowned him out. The whistles—plastic, in order to foil the metal detectors put in after tenants disrupted the RGB's 2006 vote with noisemakers—were so loud that chair Marvin Markus (nicknamed "Marvin Markup" by tenants) was forced to call a recess.

Holder said she had not known there was a formal

proposal for a minimum increase until the morning of the meeting, when Markus issued a memo supporting it. "We really did feel kind of blindsided," said Ronald Languedoc, the other tenant representative.

The minimum-increase idea was put into play at a hearing in Brooklyn June 11, when about 20 small owners organized by the Rent Stabilization Association—the city's largest landlord lobby—testified that they needed such increases to meet rising fuel costs. Though most of the city's rent-stabilized apartments are owned by a small number of large real-estate companies, the RSA has historically used small owners as poster children to demand rent increases.

"The real-estate industry was very organized as they brought out their dog-and-pony show with one sympathetic small landlord after another to testify," Bronx Mitchell-Lama tenant Barry Soltz said of the

RGB hearing he attended. "Noticeably absent were any of the large landlords, corporations and private equity groups... no Pinnacle, no Shaloms, or Gluck types testified."

Owners made up about one-third of the crowd of about 300, the largest landlord turnout at an RGB vote in the past decade. Like British soccer fans trying to take the opposing team's end of the stands, the owners occupied seats on what traditionally has been the tenant side of the room, setting the stage for shouting matches.

"Get a [expletive deleted] job!" one landlord screamed at a woman SRO tenant.

"I have a [expletive deleted] job!" the woman



Tenants protest before the RGB meeting.

shouted back.

"These tenants don't like to pay rent," said Madelene Phillips, a Caribbean-accented woman who owns a building in the Morris Park section of the Bronx. Rents for its seven apartments range from \$730 to \$1,231, with some subsidized by the federal

*continued on page 5*

## City Budget Deal Guts Eviction Prevention, Hits Housing Programs

By Joe Catron

**D**espite a \$4.5 billion surplus, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn agreed on June 26 to a \$59.1 billion "austerity budget" that cuts millions of dollars in funding from eviction-prevention programs for low-income tenants, the New York City Housing Authority, and other affordable-housing providers.

These drastic cuts will preserve tax breaks—including a \$400 rebate due to every homeowner in the five boroughs, but off-limits to the city's tenant majority.

Among eviction-prevention programs, the tenant practices of the Legal Aid Society and Legal Services NYC took particularly hard hits. The agencies, which

advise thousands of low-income tenants annually through 29 courthouse, neighborhood, and specialized offices, will lose 25 percent of their Anti-Eviction Program funding and 59 percent of their Civil Legal Services funding. The cuts will result in dozens of layoffs and thousands more tenants going unrepresented in disputes with their landlords.

Neighborhood-based eviction-prevention efforts facing reductions include the Upper West Side's Goddard Riverside West Side SRO Law Project, MFY Legal Services in East Harlem and the Lower East Side, and Housing Conservation Coordinators in Hell's Kitchen.

"This is a devastating blow to New York City

tenants who need legal services more than ever," said Jeanette Zelhof, interim executive director of MFY, which receives Anti-Eviction Program funding. "This is a critical time to fight to preserve the last remnants of affordable housing in the face of high rent increases and tenant harassment to make room for higher-paying tenants."

"The effect of slashing funding for anti-eviction work will obviously be evictions," said Gibb Surette, chairman of the Legal Services Staff Association, the National Organization of Legal Services Workers (UAW Local 2320) units representing employees at Legal Services NYC and MFY. Together these two organizations represented

low-income New Yorkers in 10,420 housing cases last year.

"Whether a given non-profit is able to cope with the losses by attrition or by shifting staff to other work, or has to resort to layoffs, the bottom line is

more low-income people losing the comparatively affordable housing they have, and more money spent by the city to deal with homelessness—to say nothing of secondary and

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## Jenny Laurie Says Farewell to Met Council

Dear Members,

I am leaving Met Council after many wonderful years as a staff member. I first came to Met Council in the mid-1980s as a volunteer when I was fighting my own landlord. The Met Council folks on the Lower East Side taught me my rights and how to stand up to the landlord—and then suggested I help teach others the same. I started volunteering in the East Fourth Street clinic and later took a position as organizer.

When I came on staff, I got to work with Jane Benedict, one of Met Council's founders, who was a powerful inspiration for me and most of the others in the office and on the board of the organization. Jane taught me how important it was to be deeply committed to a political goal (decent, integrated, and affordable housing) and the importance of speaking directly and honestly to everyone

I dealt with. I met others of her generation at Met Council who were fearless and deeply political, most of whom had come to the organization through the early years of fighting the destructive powers of Robert Moses and the city's urban-renewal program.

The years since I first started have seen major changes in the tenant movement. How were things different then? I went to Housing Court almost every day with tenants on rent strike. There were no decontrolled units in buildings, and while there had been some co-op conversion, it had not hit the neighborhoods where I worked. The residents were all tenants—all rent-regulated—and they were willing to work together to form powerful tenant associations.

The big issues then were services—heat, hot water, severe

security problems. There were speculators then, as now, but they didn't seem as sophisticated as they do now. And perhaps my memory is wrong, but it seems to me that most tenants, even in the poor neighborhoods where I worked, could afford their rent. Now, of course, it seems that most tenants we work with can barely afford their rent, and the landlords want higher-income tenants in their buildings, and use sophisticated methods to get the long-term tenants out.

It was also through Met Council that I met the man who became my husband, Kenny Schaeffer. A short time later, the floor of the office was cleared to make room for a playpen as first my daughter Hazel and then Elizabeth took

advantage of the women in the office who spoiled them and educated them.

I leave Met Council in the capable hands of the board of directors, chaired by Scott Sommer, who has been involved longer than I have and is deeply committed to the organization's future. The board will be meeting over the summer to find my replacement and decide on the future direction of the organization.

I can't thank all of you enough—members, board members, courageous tenant leaders, great and generous volunteers—for 20 wonderful years. I hope in the future to be able to give back a small portion of that as a volunteer.

—Jenny Laurie

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To reach the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development's Central Complaints hotline, call 311.

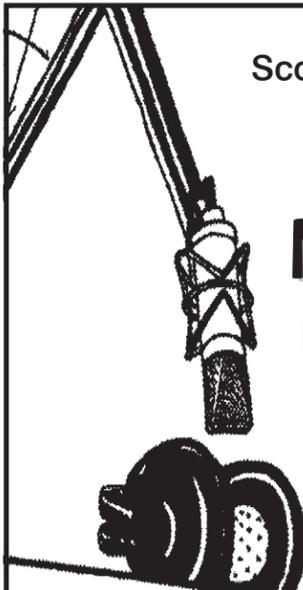
Also call 311 to reach the Dept. of Buildings and other city agencies.

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Scott Sommer hosts Met Council's

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# EL INQUILINO HISPANO

## Inquilinos enfurecidos denuncian 'farsa' de la RGB con silbidos Sin embargo, la junta golpea a inquilinos con aumento mínimo de \$45

Por Steven Wishnia

Traducido por Lightning Translations

Con sus voces ahogadas por los silbatos chilladores de manifestantes, el 19 de junio la Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) municipal asestó a los inquilinos los aumentos de alquiler más grandes desde 1989.

La junta votó 5 a 4 para permitir aumentos de hasta un 4.5 por ciento por un contrato de un año y un 8.5 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. Los inquilinos que pagan menos de \$1,000 al mes y han vivido en el mismo apartamento por más de seis años sufrirán aun más: La junta aprobó un aumento mínimo de \$45 por un contrato de un año y \$85 por dos años. Como siempre, los cinco miembros públicos de la RGB nombrados por Bloomberg votaron a favor de los aumentos.

Durante los últimos años, inquilinos apretados en el escurridor de sueldos estancados y alquileres por las nubes se han vuelto cada vez más hartos de la imposición repetida de aumentos de alquiler por la RGB, casi siempre aprobados sin que los miembros públicos digan palabra alguna. Se supone que los

miembros públicos sean neutrales (la junta tiene dos representantes de caseros y dos de inquilinos), pero cuando un miembro público votó a favor de una congelación de alquileres en 2005, el alcalde Bloomberg lo despidió.

"Bienvenidos a la farsa", dijo el Presidente del Condado de Manhattan Scott Stringer en una manifestación antes de la reunión en Cooper Union. La Vocera del Concejo Municipal Christine Quinn llamó a la RGB un "sello de goma para la aprobación automática de aumentos de renta".

La ira creció cuando la junta votó 7 a 2 en contra del intento de la representante de inquilinos Adriene Holder para bloquear los aumentos mínimos. Cuando el representante de caseros Steven Schleider empezó a hablar, los silbatos chilladores ahogaron su voz. Los silbatos, de plástico para pasar desapercibidos por los detectores de metal instalados después de que inquilinos interrumpieron la votación de la RGB en 2006 con matracas, eran tan ruidosos que el presidente de la junta Marvin

Markus (apodado "Marvin Markup" [Marvin el Sobrecargador] por los inquilinos) fue obligado a decretar un descanso.

Holder dijo que no sabía que existió una propuesta formal para un aumento mínimo hasta la mañana del día de la reunión, cuando Markus emitió un memorando apoyándolo. "Realmente nos sentimos como víctimas de un atraco inesperado", dijo Ronald Languedoc, el otro representante de inquilinos.

La idea del aumento mínimo fue puesta en juego en una audiencia en Brooklyn el 11 de junio, cuando alrededor de 20 pequeños propietarios organizados por la Asociación de Estabilización de Renta (Rent Stabilization Association, RSA), el grupo de presión de caseros más grande en la ciudad, testificaron que necesitaban tales aumentos para cubrir los costos por el alza de combustible. Aunque la mayoría de los apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad son propiedad de una pequeña cantidad de grandes compañías de bienes raíces, la

RSA históricamente se han servido de los pequeños propietarios como ejemplos patéticos para recomendar aumentos de renta.

"La industria de bienes raíces fue muy organizada al llevar su pan y circo, con un pequeño propietario simpático tras otro para ser testigo", dijo el inquilino Mitchell-Lama del Bronx Barry Soltz sobre la audiencia de la RGB a la que él asistió. "Brillaron por su ausencia todos los grandes corporaciones y grupos de capital privado: ninguno de los tipo Pinnacle, Shalom o Gluck testificó".

Los propietarios constituyeron alrededor de un tercio de la multitud de unas 300 personas, la asistencia más grande de caseros en una votación de la RGB en toda la década pasada. Parecidos a aficionados de fútbol británico tratando de apoderarse del lado de la tribuna del equipo contrario, los propietarios ocuparon sillas en lo que tradicionalmente ha sido el lado de los inquilinos en el salón, creando el ambiente para discu-

*pasa a la página 4*

## Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 39)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2007 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2008.

### Renovación de Contrato

Los caseros tienen que ofrecer a los inquilinos de renta estabilizada una renovación de contrato dentro de 90 a 120 días antes de que venza su contrato actual. La renovación de contrato tiene que mantener los mismos términos y condiciones que el contrato que vencerá, excepto cuando refleje un cambio en la ley. Una vez que se haya recibido el ofrecimiento de renovación, los inquilinos tienen 60 días para aceptarlo y escoger si van a renovar el contrato por uno o dos años. El propietario tiene que devolver la copia firmada y fechada al inquilino dentro de 30 días. La nueva renta no entrará en vigencia hasta que empiece el nuevo contrato, o cuando el propietario devuelva la copia firmada (lo que suceda después). Ofrecimientos retrasados: si el casero ofrece la renovación tarde (menos de 90 días antes de que venza el contrato actual), el contrato puede empezar, a la opción del inquilino, o en la fecha que hubiera empezado si se hubiera hecho un ofrecimiento a tiempo, o en el primer pago de renta fechada 90 días después de la fecha del ofrecimiento del contrato. Las pautas de renta usadas para la renovación no pueden ser mayores que los incrementos de la RGB vigentes en la fecha en que el contrato debía empezar (si se lo hubiera ofrecido a tiempo). El inquilino no tiene que pagar el nuevo aumento de renta hasta 90 días después de que se haya hecho el ofrecimiento.

### Asignación de Subarriendo

Los caseros podrán cobrar un aumento de 10 por ciento durante el término de subarriendo que comience durante este período de las pautas.

Programa de Exención de Incrementos de Renta para las Personas de Mayor Edad Las personas de mayor edad con renta estabilizada (y los que viven en apartamentos de renta controlada, Mitchell-Lama y cooperativas de dividendos limitados), con 62 años o más, y cuyos ingresos familiares disponibles al año sean de \$27,000 o menos (para 2006) y que paguen (o enfrenten un aumento de renta que les haría pagar) un tercio o más de aquel ingreso en renta pueden ser elegibles para una congelación de renta. Solicite a: NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10007 o llame al 311 o visite su sitio Web, [nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie\\_sp/scrie\\_sp.shtml](http://nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie_sp/scrie_sp.shtml).

Programa de Exención de Incrementos de Renta para Minusválidos Inquilinos con renta regulada que reciben ayuda económica elegible relacionada con discapacidad, que tengan ingresos de \$17,580 o menos para individuales y \$25,212 o menos para una pareja y enfrenten rentas iguales o más de un tercio de sus ingresos pueden ser elegibles para un congelamiento de renta. Solicite a: NYC Dept. of Finance, DRIE Exemptions, 59 Maiden Lane - 20th floor, New York, NY 10038. Llame al 311 para una solicitud o vaya al sitio Web en [www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property\\_tax\\_reduc\\_drie.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_drie.shtml)

Las unidades desvanes  
Los aumentos legalizados para unidades

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual		Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años
<b>Renovación del Contrato</b>	Todos		3%	5.75%
<b>Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos</b>	Más de \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17.25%	20%
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 17.25%	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 20%
	Menos de \$300	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17.25% + \$100	20% + \$100
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 175% + \$100	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 20% + \$100
	Renta de \$300 a \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17.25% o \$100, lo que sea mayor	20% o \$100, lo que sea mayor
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 17.25%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 20%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor

de desván son un 2.5 por ciento por un contrato de un año y 5.25 por ciento por dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

### Hoteles y SROs

El aumento es un 0 por ciento de la renta cobrada el 30 de septiembre de 2007 para los apartamentos de hotel de clase A, casas de alojamiento, hoteles de clase B (30 o más habitaciones), hoteles de una sola habitación y pensiones (clase B, 6-29 habitaciones).

### Exceso de cobro

Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros se aprovecharán de las complejidades de estas pautas y concesiones adicionales, además del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus apartamentos,

para cobrar una renta ilegal. Los inquilinos pueden impugnar los aumentos de renta sin autorización en las cortes o al presentar una impugnación con la agencia estatal de vivienda, la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunitaria (Division of Housing and Community Renewal, DHCR). El primer paso en el proceso es ponerse en contacto con la DHCR para ver el registro oficial del historial de renta. Vaya a [www.dhcr.state.ny.us](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us) o llame al 718-739-6400 y pida un historial de renta detallado. Luego, hable con un abogado o defensor experto antes de seguir.

Para las pautas previas, llame a la RGB al 212-385-2934 o vaya al [www.housingnyc.com](http://www.housingnyc.com)

**'farsa' de la RGB**

viene de la página 4

siones a gritos.

"¡Consíguelo un [palabrota suprimida] trabajo!" gritó un casero a una inquilina de un apartamento de una sola habitación (SRO).

"¡Ya tengo un [palabrota suprimida] trabajo!" gritó la mujer como respuesta.

"A estos inquilinos no les gusta pagar el alquiler", dijo Madelene Phillips, una mujer con acento caribeño, propietaria de un edificio en el área Morris Park del Bronx. Los alquileres de sus siete apartamentos varían entre \$730 y \$1,231, con algunos subvencionados por el programa federal Sección 8; sin embargo, Phillips no simpatiza con las quejas de los inquilinos sobre los costos de vivienda. "Si vives en el edificio de alguien y no tienes con qué pagar, debes mudarte", dijo. "Yo tengo que pagar la hipoteca, el agua, el combustible. La factura del agua es más de \$3,000".

Según Michael McKee de TenantsPAC, los miembros públicos de la RGB Betty Phillips Adams y Risa Levine querían aumentos mucho más bajos de los que querían los otros dos miembros públicos, David Wenk y Jonathan Kimmel. Ellas propusieron a Languedoc y Holder aumentos de 3 y 6 por ciento, pero el quinto voto decisivo hubiera sido el de Markus, quien exigió algún tipo de aumento suplementario. Los representantes de inquilinos dijeron que nunca podrían estar de acuerdo con esto.

Adams y Levine insisten que a pesar de la ausencia de un debate público, los miembros públicos trabajan arduamente tras bastidores y toman decisiones justas. "Si los representantes de inquilinos dicen que están a favor de un aumento de un cero por ciento y los costos aumentan, no se puede sostener un intercambio de opiniones", dijo Adams.

Levine, quien al principio se

opuso a los aumentos mínimos pero votó a favor de ellos dos veces, echa la culpa a la Legislatura estatal y el Concejo Municipal "por no abordar el tema de la vivienda asequible". Ella preferiría abolir los controles de renta y cambiar a un "sistema basado en ingresos". La estabilización de rentas, dijo, "pone una carga indebida en los caseros. Es la única industria que está obligada a subvencionar a la gente". Marvin Markus también es partidario de terminar con la estabilización de rentas y reemplazarla con débiles medidas de protección social para inquilinos de bajos ingresos o mayores de edad.

Abolir controles de renta a favor de tal sistema podría suponer que el gobierno subvencionara los alquileres de todos los inquilinos que ganan menos de \$100,000 al año, se dijo a Levine. Ella respondió que los caseros podrían recibir créditos impositivos para proveer vivienda para inquilinos de bajos ingresos.

Tanto Adams como Levine criticaron las protestas; Levine dijo que "la falta de cortesía" de los inquilinos "les costó algunos dólares".

Los inquilinos y sus defensores estuvieron enojados y resignados tras la votación. "Tengo vecinos de mayor edad que han estado en el edificio por 30 años. No tenemos con qué pagar otro aumento del alquiler", dijo Marcella Mitaynes, una cuidadora de niños desempleada de Sunset Park, Brooklyn, quien llevó consigo a su hija de 8 años. Ya que su alquiler es \$624, ella recibirá el aumento mínimo de \$45.

"Es malo", dijo Languedoc con un suspiro. El único compromiso posible hubiera significado endosar aumentos de alquiler inaceptablemente altos, dijo. Aunque la carga del alquiler se adelanta por mucho a los ingresos de los inquilinos, añadió, los costos de com-

combustible y agua en alza causaron que los miembros públicos tuvieran mucho más simpatía por los caseros, y los grupos de presión de la industria de bienes raíces fueron muy eficientes al asegurar la asistencia de los pequeños propietarios, aunque los aumentos de la junta también enriquecen a los importantes propietarios.

"Desde mi punto de vista, hicimos lo único que podíamos hacer razonablemente: interrumpir la votación final. Ya se había tendido la trampa", escribió McKee en un correo electrónico a los activistas inquilinos. "Si la noche del jueves pasado muestra alguna cosa, es lo ciego que son el alcalde Bloomberg y la gente alrededor de él al daño que están haciendo al programa de vivienda asequible más grande en la ciudad: la regulación de rentas".

La mejor esperanza de los inquilinos, especula Languedoc, no vendrá desde la RGB. El Senador

estatal Tom Duane (demócrata de Manhattan) ha patrocinado un proyecto de ley que aumentaría el número de representantes de caseros e inquilinos en las RGB locales, para que los miembros públicos no sigan constituyendo un bloque de mayoría, y requeriría que los miembros de la junta se ratificaran por el Concejo Municipal. También establecería que las juntas consideraran tanto los ingresos como los gastos de los caseros y reduciría el recargo en apartamentos vacíos de un 20 por ciento a un 5 por ciento.

Sin embargo, nadie en el movimiento de inquilinos cree que el proyecto de ley de Duane, la legislación para otorgar a la ciudad autonomía en torno a regulaciones de renta, o cualquiera de las varias medidas a favor de los inquilinos aprobadas por la Asamblea en mayo prosperará en el Senado estatal mientras éste tenga una mayoría de republicanos.

## HASA For ALL Campaign Advocating for Homeless People With and At Risk for HIV

**A** coalition of activist groups led by the New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN), Gay Men's Health Crisis, and Housing Works is fighting to expand New York City's unique guarantee of rental assistance, a nutritional allowance, and transportation for people living with AIDS to all low-income New Yorkers living with HIV.

The HASA For ALL battle began in 2006, when activists successfully pressured the city's health department to release data on the health of homeless adults. AIDS was the primary cause of death for women in the shelters and the second leading cause of death for men, accounting for 11 percent of all shelter deaths. But people with AIDS weren't supposed to be in the shelters. A 1998 lawsuit brought by activists guaranteed medically appropriate, same-day emergency housing assistance to homeless people with an AIDS diagnosis through the city's HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA).

According to Sean Barry, codirector of NYCAHN, the problem is that "people who didn't have an AIDS diagnosis and didn't qualify for HASA because of that are dying because the bad conditions in the shelters worsen their health so quickly—before they can go through the bureaucratic process to get HASA benefits once they do get sick." Housing Works estimates that 7,000 low-income people living with HIV would benefit from HASA For ALL, including an estimated 800 individuals in the shelter system.

"It took me two years to get on HASA," Alan Perez, coordinator of the Legislative Action Group at GMHC, says. "I had to stop taking my meds just to get on it. A lot of people are doing something to get sick, especially people who

are in the shelter system. They should be in permanent housing." Perez talks to clients who were turned down for HASA because their CD4 cell counts were too high and brings them to City Hall to advocate.

The irony that people with HIV who are doing relatively well are making themselves sick just to get needed help is not lost on activists. They developed a cost-benefit analysis revealing that, despite an estimated \$68 million per year price tag, HASA For ALL would save the city money in shelter and hospital costs, keeping people with HIV healthy—and could prevent as many as 66 new infections each month.

A bill to extend HASA services has been introduced by City Councilmember Annabel Palma (D-Bronx). But Mayor Bloomberg and the city health department oppose it, saying there isn't enough money. City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, a longtime supporter of AIDS housing activism, opposes the HASA For ALL legislation, saying it would cost too much and divert funds from where they are most needed.

New York City may be the major U.S. battleground where housing as a vital part of HIV prevention and treatment is being fought for, backed up by substantial, convincing research. One thing is for sure: Activists around the country and the world are paying close attention, knowing that the New Yorkers' experiences with this fight will provide many useful lessons for their work.

*The full version of this article appeared in Solidarity Project, the online magazine of the Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project, [www.champnetwork.org](http://www.champnetwork.org). Reprinted with permission.*

### Inquilinos de mayor edad y minusválidos

Las personas mayores de 62 años o más, en vivienda de renta regulada, Mitchell-Lama y algunos otros programas, con ingresos disponibles anuales de familia de \$27,000 o menos (el año pasado) y quienes pagan (o enfrentan un aumento de renta que les obligaría a pagar) un tercio o más de estos ingresos en renta pueden llenar los requisitos para una Exención de Incrementos de Renta para las Personas de Mayor Edad (Senior Citizen Rent Exemption, SCRIE). Solicítela a:

The NYC Dept. of the Aging  
SCRIE Unit  
2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007

Los inquilinos minusválidos que reciben ayuda financiera relacionada con invalidez y tienen ingresos de \$17,580 o menos para individuos y \$25,323 o menos para una pareja y quienes enfrentan rentas iguales a o más de un tercio de sus ingresos pueden llenar los requisitos para la Exención de Incrementos de Renta para Minusválidos (Disability Rent Increase Exemption, DRIE). Solicítela a:

NYC Dept. of Finance  
DRIE Exemptions  
59 Maiden Lane – 20th Floor  
New York, NY 10038

La información sobre DRIE y SCRIE está disponible en el sitio Web de la ciudad, [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov), o llame a 311.



**City Budget**

*continued from page 1*

longer-term consequences,” Surette continued.

The New York City Housing Authority received substantial cuts. Having lost \$611 million in federal funding, the city’s largest affordable housing provider, which houses 400,000 low- and moderate-income tenants in 178,000 apartments, will almost certainly curtail its programs for seniors and youth in NYCHA buildings and neighborhoods. More than 200 of the authority’s 280 community and senior centers may be closed.

“Barring new funding to support our unfunded community centers and programs, NYCHA will be forced to imminently take these tough actions,” warned Millie Molina, the agency’s deputy director of communications. The authority faces an estimated \$200 million deficit over the coming fiscal year.

After protests, the Council and Bloomberg agreed to reduce the cuts in NYCHA’s budget from \$30 million to \$12 million. But that will save only 75 community and senior centers, Councilmember Rosie Mendez (D-Manhattan) told *The Villager*.

“I am disappointed that with a \$4.5 billion surplus, the mayor forced the Council to cut funding for essential services, including homeless prevention, legal and mental health services, and workforce development,” said Councilmember Bill de Blasio (D-Brooklyn), chair of the General Welfare Committee. “In addition, the New York City Housing Authority, which is in dire financial straits, will be forced to shut senior centers and youth programs across the city. The mayor should not have put the city in this situation, and these cuts will be felt deeply for years

to come.”

Smaller affordable-housing providers may implement even more drastic reductions. Forty tenants of CAMBA in Brooklyn face the loss of their apartments, funded through a speaker’s initiative for low-income people with HIV. “I just got into the program four months ago, and it took me approximately two years to get that housing,” said David Golden, a board member of the New York City AIDS Housing Network. “Quinn’s turning her back on the community again, the same community that voted her into office.”

“I think the Speaker has to be much stronger with the mayor, and the members, we have to take some role in this too,” Councilmember Charles Barron (D-Brooklyn) told reporters. “If she won’t stand up to him, then we have to stand up to her.”

The budget provoked so much conflict that barely a third of the Council’s members attended the press release announcing it. Bloomberg and Quinn initially declined to mark their agreement with a handshake, only performing one, along with a ritualistic kiss, for the cameras after prodding by a reporter and a trip to the mayor’s office by a Quinn aide, who asked that he return to the City Hall rotunda. “Take two,” the Speaker quipped.

Bloomberg waited less than a day before indicating that he would consider additional cuts midyear if economic conditions warranted them. “I hope it [the budget] is realistic,” he said June 27. “If it isn’t, we can change it during the year.”

On June 29, hundreds gathered on the steps of City Hall to demand that

Bloomberg and Quinn restore funding for social necessities like eviction-prevention programs, public housing, after-school activities, HIV/AIDS treatment, and senior centers. But later that evening, the Council approved the budget with its cuts largely intact.

“These are huge impacts on our ability to provide services,” said Stuart Lawrence, a Met Council board member, Housing Conservation Coordinators staff attorney, and chairman of

Hell’s Kitchen Organizers, the NOLSW unit at HCC, in a June 30 appearance on WBAI’s “Housing Notebook.” “And it just doesn’t make sense, at a time when tenants are facing greater pressures, when homelessness is a threat that more and more New Yorkers are facing on a daily basis, to be cutting funding for homelessness prevention.” The deal slashed HCC’s Civil Legal Services funding by 44 percent.

“I really feel like we’re back almost in another

era, when we had to fight for every penny, and we had to really fight for every bit of service that we could get for poor people,” added Stephan Russo, executive director of Goddard Riverside, which will share in the loss of 25 percent of Anti-Eviction Program funding. “I, for the life of me, confess that I don’t understand why, in a city as wealthy as this, with a budget at \$60 billion, we can’t find the money to keep these services.”

**NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 40)**

*for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2008 through Sept. 30, 2009  
Order No. 39, covering leases commencing prior to October 1, 2008,  
is available at <http://www.metcouncil.net/campaigns/RGB.htm>*

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent	One-year Lease	Two-year Lease	
<b>Renewal Leases</b>	All...	landlord supplies heat	4.5%	8.5%
		tenant pays for heat	4%	8%
	<i>Except where last vacancy lease was 6 or more years ago and rent is below \$1000</i>	landlord supplies heat	\$40	\$85
		tenant pays for heat	\$40	\$80
<b>Vacancy leases</b>	More than \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	16%	20%
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 16%	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%
	Less than \$300	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	16% plus \$100	20% plus \$100
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 16% plus \$100	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20% plus \$100
	Rent \$300 to \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	16% or \$100, whichever is greater	20% or \$100, whichever is greater
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 16%, or \$100, whichever is greater	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%, or \$100, whichever is greater

**Renewal Leases**

Landlords must offer a rent-stabilized tenant a renewal lease 90 to 120 days before the expiration of the current lease. The renewal lease must keep the same terms and conditions as the expiring lease, except when reflecting a change in the law. Once the renewal offer is received, the tenant has 60 days to accept it and choose whether to renew the lease for one or two years. The owner must return the signed and dated copy to the tenant in 30 days. The new rent does not go into effect until the start of the new lease term, or when the owner returns the signed copy (whichever is later).

**Late offers:** If the owner offers the renewal late (fewer than 90 days before the expiration of the current lease), the lease term can begin, at the tenant’s option, either on the date it would have begun had a timely offer been made, or on the first rent payment date 90 days after the date of the lease offer. The rent guidelines used for the renewal can be no greater than the RGB increases in effect on the date the lease should have begun (if timely offered). The tenant does not have to pay the new rent increase until 90 days after the offer was made.

**Sublease Allowance**  
Landlords can charge a 10 per-

cent increase during the term of a sublease that commences during this guideline period.

**Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program** Rent-stabilized seniors (and those living in rent-controlled, Mitchell-Lama, and limited equity coop apartments), 62 or older, whose disposable annual household income is \$28,000 or less (for 2007 tax year) and who pay (or face a rent increase that would cause them to pay) one-third or more of that income in rent may be eligible for a rent freeze. *Apply to:* NYC Dept. for the Aging, SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10007 or call 311 or visit their Web site, [www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie/scrie.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie/scrie.shtml).

**Disability Rent Increase Exemption Program** Rent-regulated tenants receiving eligible disability-related financial assistance who have incomes of \$18,396 or less for individuals and \$26,460 or less for a couple and are facing rents equal to more than one-third of their income may be eligible for a rent freeze. *Apply to:* NYC Dept. of Finance, DRIE Exemptions, 59 Maiden Lane, 20th floor, New York, NY 10038. Call 311 for an application or go to the Web site at [www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property\\_tax\\_reduc\\_drie.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_drie.shtml).

**Loft Units**

Legalized loft-unit increases are 2.5 percent for a one-year lease and 5.25 percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

**Hotels and SROs**  
4.5% for all categories, however, 0% when fewer than 85% of units are occupied by permanent, rent-regulated tenants.

**Rent Overcharges**

Tenants should be aware that many landlords will exploit the complexities of these guidelines and bonuses—and the tenant’s unfamiliarity with the apartment’s rent history—to charge an illegal rent. Tenants can challenge unauthorized rent increases through the courts or by filing a challenge with the state housing agency, the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). The first step in the process is to contact the DHCR to see the official record of the rent history. Go to [www.dhcr.state.ny.us](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us) or call (718) 739-6400 and ask for a detailed rent history. Then speak to a knowledgeable advocate or a lawyer before proceeding.

*For previous guidelines, call the RGB at (212) 385-2934 or go to [www.housingnyc.com](http://www.housingnyc.com).*

**Westchester RGB Slams Tenants Too**

Rent-stabilized tenants in Westchester County will also get hit with a \$45 minimum increase.

The County Rent Board voted June 26 to impose the \$45 minimum, along with increases of 4.5 percent for a one-year lease and 6.5 percent for a two-year lease. Only the tenant representatives on the board voted against it.

Unlike the supplementary increases passed by the New York City rent board, the minimum will apply to all rent-stabilized apartments in the county.

It will affect tenants paying less than \$1,000 a month if they renew for one year and those paying less than \$700 a month if they renew for two years.

There are between 30,000 and 40,000 rent-stabilized apartments in Westchester.

Meanwhile, on June 10 the Rockland County Rent Board voted for the same rent guidelines as last year: a 2.5 percent increase on a one-year lease renewal and 4.25 percent for two years.

# Critics Say Bloomberg Failing to Reduce Homelessness

By Jarrett Murphy

Four years to the day after Mayor Michael Bloomberg committed New York City to a major reduction in homelessness, 33,222 people woke up in city shelters on June 23. While that's down from four years ago, it's still higher than when Bloomberg took office in 2001, and a long way from the ambitious target he announced three years later.

To members of Picture the Homeless, the mayor's performance warrants prosecution—at least a mock one. The group, a nonprofit advocacy organization run by homeless people, commemorated the anniversary of the mayor's plan by putting Bloomberg on "trial" for offenses such as "arrogance for failing to acknowledge his policy's failures" and "reckless endangerment of a child—14,000 counts and counting," a reference to the number of children living in shelters.

At a plaza off East 50th Street on June 24, as the "defendant" (a guy holding a Bloomberg mask) looked on, "witnesses" testified against the mayor. City Councilmember Tony Avella, a Queens Democrat who is running for mayor, claimed that rising homelessness is "a direct result of the mayor's pro-development agenda." Shelter residents decried the city's housing subsidy for homeless people as ill-conceived. Activist Turhan White claimed that homeless people "are harassed constantly on a daily basis for no reason whatsoever" by city police. He added: "Mr. Bloomberg, you have the authority—the power—to calm your boys down. It's up to you."

The verdict was a foregone conclusion: "Guilty! Guilty!" the crowd shouted. Bloomberg's sentence: to spend a year in a city-funded shelter.

The mayor is unlikely to heed the court's order. But when he leaves office at the end of 2009, judgment will be passed on the plan he unveiled in June 2004,

when he told a group assembled by the Association for a Better New York: "We are too strong, and too smart, and too compassionate a city to surrender to the scourge of homelessness. We won't do it. We won't allow it." Called Uniting for Solutions Beyond Shelter, the Bloomberg plan sought to shift city policy from relying on temporary shelters toward promoting permanent housing and homelessness prevention.

The plan included a menu of innovative policy approaches: discharge planning so inmates getting out of city jails wouldn't end up on the streets, an effort to coordinate drop-in centers citywide, better-skilled outreach workers, and so-called "low-threshold" housing to get hardcore homeless off the street even if they aren't at first interested in mental health or drug rehab services. It was all aimed at Bloomberg's goals of "ending chronic homelessness in 10 years" and reducing street homelessness and the shelter population by two-thirds by the end of 2009.

A two-thirds reduction in the shelter populations would require the total number of people living in shelters to fall from 36,600 when Bloomberg announced the plan, to around 12,100 in 2009; the current census of 33,200 represents a 9.3 percent reduction. The street homeless count would have to drop from 4,395 (the first one-night, citywide count in 2005) to 1,450, but the 2008 survey found 3,306 on the street.

Though the Department of Homeless Services declined to offer a "defense" to the "prosecution," DHS points to progress in reducing the homeless population in several categories, and in placing 700 people in permanent housing since the fall. Press secretary Heather Janik said in a statement: "Under Mayor Bloomberg, New York City has created one of the most sophisticated shelter systems in the country. Con-

tinuous, effective improvements have been made throughout the Administration. DHS has shifted policy to action, implementing critical prevention, outreach and cultural changes to better serve the homeless population."

But unless the next 18 months see extremely rapid progress, the city will not hit the target Bloomberg set four summers ago. The numbers of homeless people are down from their 2003 highs, but in no way are they on track for a two-thirds reduction.

At this point in the mayor's plan, there were supposed to be fewer than 4,500 families in shelters, but there are more than 8,600. Only 5,000 single adults were supposed to be housed in shelters in Year 4, but more than 6,500 are. And the shelter census only covers those who get in: Last year, nearly 9,000 families were found ineligible for temporary housing. While most of the 12,000 families that were found eligible in fiscal year 2007 succeeded on their first application, one-third had to try more than once. Outside the shelters, street homelessness is down 25 percent from 2005 to 2008—dramatic, but not even halfway to the mayor's target of a two-thirds reduction.

Bloomberg's goal of reducing

homelessness by two-thirds was ambitious, advocates say, but achievable. They blame several policy moves for shortcomings so far. For three years, the administration's key program for getting homeless people into permanent housing was Housing Stability Plus, which offered rent subsidies for five years but sharply reduced the subsidy each year, squeezing families that were still getting on their feet. The administration dropped that program last year in favor of three new rent-subsidy programs; DHS says those programs have been unexpectedly popular, with 4,000 families signing up already.

The mayor's decision in 2004 to stop providing Section 8 housing vouchers to families leaving shelters was another obstacle for the plan, according to the advocacy group—and frequent administration critic—Coalition for the Homeless. Studies have shown that Section 8 is an effective antidote to homelessness. The Bloomberg administration, however, has credited its changed Section 8 policy with opening up vouchers for other rent-pressured New Yorkers. Last year, the city offered 22,000 new Section 8 vouchers,

*continued on page 8*

## Supreme Court Won't Hear Challenge to Brooklyn Arena

By Steven Wishnia

Following the Supreme Court's refusal to hear their challenge to the Atlantic Yards development in Brooklyn, opponents of the proposed sports arena and housing complex plan to take their case to state courts.

The Court announced June 23 that it would not review the case, *Goldstein et al. v. Pataki et al.*, a lawsuit by 11 tenants and property owners on the Atlantic Yards site who had disputed the government's use of eminent domain to seize all the buildings in a seven-block area. A federal appeals court dismissed the suit in February, saying the development had enough of a public purpose to justify taking private property.

Justice Samuel Alito said he would have granted the plaintiffs' petition to hear their appeal, but four justices must agree to take a case for the Supreme Court to hear it. The plaintiffs had hoped that the Court might want to use the Atlantic Yards case to clarify its controversial 2005 decision in *Kelo v. New London*, which held that government could use eminent domain to take private property and turn it over to another private owner if there was a legitimate public purpose such as economic development.

"Unless the Supreme Court intervenes," lead attorney Matthew Brinckerhoff said at the time, "the government will continue

to have carte blanche to take private homes and businesses and give them to influential citizens as long as one can imagine a conceivable benefit to the public, no matter how small or unlikely it may be."

Supporters of the Atlantic Yards development argue that bringing professional basketball to Brooklyn is a public benefit, and that the 16 high-rises slated in the \$4 billion plan will include a significant amount of affordable housing. Opponents argue that Atlantic Yards will mainly benefit its developer, Forest City Ratner, and that it is increasingly unlikely that the affordable housing will be built.

Slightly more than one-third of the proposed 6,430 apartments are classified as affordable, with "affordable" defined as available to households making less than \$113,000 a year. Only about 900 will rent for less than \$1,000 a month at current prices. The units for "middle-income" families with children range from \$1,914 to \$3,084.

The arena's foes will soon file an action in state courts, said Brinckerhoff. "New York State law, and the state constitution, prohibit the government from taking private homes and businesses simply because a powerful developer demands it," he said in a statement. "Yet, that is what has happened."

### Senior and Disabled Tenants

Seniors, 62 or older, in rent-regulated, Mitchell-Lama and some other housing programs whose disposable annual household income is \$27,000 or less (for the previous year) and who pay (or face a rent increase that would cause them to pay) one-third or more of that income in rent may be eligible for a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE). Apply to:

The NYC Dept of the Aging  
SCRIE Unit  
2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007.

Disabled tenants receiving eligible disability-related financial assistance with incomes of \$17,580 or less for individuals and \$25,212 or less for a couple facing rents equal to or more than one-third of their income may be eligible for the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). Apply to:

NYC Dept. of Finance  
DRIE Exemptions  
59 Maiden Lane - 20<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10038

DRIE and SCRIE info is available on the city's website [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov), or call 311.

**Homelessness**

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and earmarked 3,000 for families at risk of homelessness.

Rather than decentralizing its intake operation as the 2004 plan outlined, DHS has proposed moving its single intake center for homeless men from the Bellevue Hospital campus to Bedford-Stuyvesant. Advocates and some elected officials oppose the move because it would take the intake center out of the borough that has the largest street homeless population.

Even where the city is closer to its goals—such as in reducing the number of single homeless adults—advocates are skeptical. According to the Coalition, much of the decline is due to the city moving homeless adults to unsafe, illegal boarding houses, but DHS disputes the claim. Comptroller William Thompson reported earlier this month that DHS is using an “off-the-books account” to pay \$161 million this fiscal year to private shelters that lack contracts with the city.

But not all the reduction in homelessness since 2003 can be attributed to shady residences or bad bookkeeping. DHS points to the expansion of its Homebase prevention services to all five boroughs as one reason why homelessness numbers have shown improvement in recent months. The city’s completion of supportive housing units—which offer services and housing to people with mental health, substance abuse or other problems—is making a dent in single adult homelessness, which is down 22 percent since May 2004. And two of the new rent subsidy programs, Fixed Income Advantage and Children Advantage, are real improvements, says Coalition for the Homeless senior policy analyst Patrick Markee, because they offer families a chance at a Section 8 voucher.

A third program, however, called Work Advantage, offers subsidies for only one or two years—a timetable that advocates oppose. “I think this administration does not see family homelessness as being a housing-affordability problem. They think it is a behavioral problem,” Markee says. Among homeless families, he argues, the problem is not joblessness but rents that are too high for working people to afford.

While the mayor’s affordable housing plan sets aside 12,000 units of supportive housing, not all will go to people in the shelter system, and at least half of those units won’t be ready until after 2011. In fiscal year 2007, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development completed 15,550 units of affordable housing; 405 went to homeless people—although the city can argue that the housing plan helped a far larger number of families avoid homelessness by getting an apartment they can afford.

Hoping to spur more affordable housing development, Councilmember Avella and Picture the Homeless are pushing legislation that would fine owners of vacant land or buildings (for taking up valuable space that could be used for housing). The Bloomberg administration, saying it is reluctant to interfere in a real-estate market that’s already fairly turbulent, has been cool to the proposal. Avella’s bill would also give shelter residents the option of converting the money the city spends on their shelter into a voucher that they would use to obtain permanent housing. The average shelter family spends 325 days in a city facility, costing the city \$95 per day, for a total expense of more than \$30,000.

The State Assembly and Senate last week passed a law that reclassifies vacant properties into a higher tax bracket, which sponsors Sen. José Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx) and Assemblymember Herman “Denny” Farrell (D-Manhattan) say will create incentives to develop vacant land and buildings. There’s no guarantee, however, that those lots will be turned into housing that low-income people can afford. (Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer also issued a report on the issue in April 2007.)

As the administration makes partial progress toward its goal of reducing homelessness on the streets and in shelters, it is also mounting an effort to eliminate the court order that compels New York City to provide shelter to homeless children and their families, which has been in place for a quarter century. In 2005, a court-appointed panel ruled that the city had earned the right to

be free from court supervision. A year later, the city petitioned Judge Helen Freedman for that freedom.

But advocates believe the end of the court order would be disastrous at a time when homelessness is higher than it has been in 20 of the past 25 years.

“No prior administration—not the Koch administration, not the Dinkins administration, not the Giuliani administration—tried to eliminate the legal obligation to provide shelter to families with children,” says Steve Banks, attorney-in-chief at the Legal Aid Society, which is fighting the *McCain v. Koch* case. “It’s particularly troubling, since a new administration is only 18 months away, and would be free to decide whether to provide shelter if the current administration succeeds in eliminating the court order.”

The city argues that its operation of the largest shelter system in the world—at a cost of more than three-quarters of a billion

dollars a year—demonstrates that it is fulfilling its legal obligations and that its provision of homeless services no longer requires court oversight.

“DHS has undergone over 100 hours of deposition and produced a quarter million of pages in documents as the *McCain* case has proceeded over the last 25 years,” press secretary Janik said in a statement. “The city would be better served by DHS employees maximizing their time reducing homelessness, than in endless litigation.”

That’s not the only legal fight underway. Last fall, DHS stopped providing emergency overnight shelter to people who were reapplying for shelter within 90 days of being denied, if they were denied because DHS found they had some other place to stay. The Legal Aid Society has challenged that policy in the courts, too.

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**WHERE TO GO FOR HELP**

**LOWER EAST SIDE BRANCH** at Cooper Square Committee  
61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. & Bowery)  
Tuesdays ..... 6:30 pm

**CHELSEA COALITION ON HOUSING**  
Covers 14<sup>th</sup> St. to 30<sup>th</sup> St., 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the Hudson River.  
322 W. 17<sup>th</sup> St. (basement), CH3-0544  
Thursdays ..... 7:30 pm

**GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side)**  
171 Avenue B (between 10 and 11 St.)  
by appointments only except for emergencies. 212-533-2541.

**HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA**  
Covers 135<sup>th</sup> St. to 165<sup>th</sup> St. from Riverside Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave.,  
537 W. 156<sup>th</sup> St.  
Thursdays ..... 8 pm

**LOWER MANHATTAN LOFT TENANTS**  
St. Margaret’s House, Pearl & Fulton Sts.,  
212-539-3538  
Wednesdays ..... 6 pm-7 pm

**MIRABAL SISTERS**  
618 W. 142nd St., 212-234-3002  
Saturdays ..... 1 - 4 pm

**PRATT AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
201 DeKalb Ave., Brooklyn,  
718-522-2613 ext. 24  
3rd Wednesday ..... 6 pm

**VILLAGE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS**  
26 Perry St. (basement), 212-741-2994  
Wednesdays ..... 6 pm

**WEST SIDE TENANTS UNION**  
4 W. 76 St.; 212-595-1274  
Tuesday & Wednesday ..... 6-7 pm

**HOUSING CONSERVATION COORDINATORS**  
777 10 Ave.; 212-541-5996  
Mondays ..... 7-9 pm

**NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS**  
Covers Sunset Park and surrounding neighborhoods  
443 39 St., Ste. 202, Brooklyn  
By appointment only. 718-686-7946, ext. 10

**QUEENS COMMUNITY HOUSE**  
Forest Hills Community Center, 10825 62nd Dr., Forest Hills  
(718) 592-5757, ext. 280  
Mondays and Wednesdays ... 9:30-11 am

**QUEENS COMMUNITY HOUSE**  
Pomonok Community Center, 6709 Kissena Blvd., Flushing  
(718) 591-6060  
Fridays ..... 10 am-12 pm



**Join Met Council**

Membership: Individual, \$25 per year; Low-income, \$15 per year; family (voluntary: 2 sharing an apartment), \$30 per year. Supporting, \$40 per year. Sustaining, min. of \$100 per year (indicate amount of pledge). For affiliation of community or tenant organizations, large buildings, trade unions, etc. call 212-979-6238.

My apartment  controlled  stabilized  unregulated  other \_\_\_\_\_  
 I am interested in volunteering my time to Met Council. Please call me to schedule times and duties. I can  counsel tenants,  do office work,  lobby public officials,  attend rallies/protests.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send your check or money order with this form to:  
Metropolitan Council on Housing, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

**ON HOUSING**

*Met Council is a citywide tenant union.*

*Our phones are open to the public  
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays from 1:30 to 5 p.m.*

*We can briefly answer your questions, help you with organizing  
or refer you to other help.*

**212-979-0611**