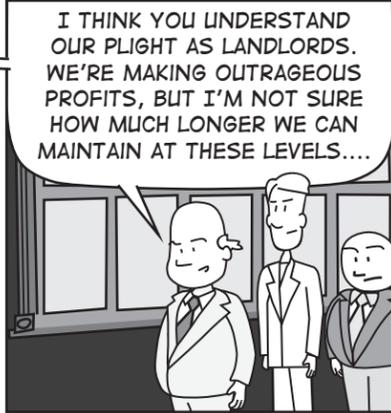


# WHY RENTS ARE OUT OF CONTROL

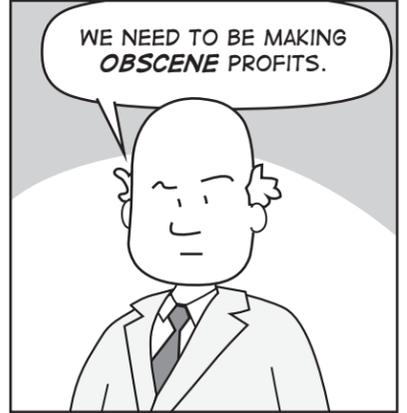
BY MARIO MAZZONI



MR. GOVERNOR, THANK YOU FOR MEETING WITH US.



I THINK YOU UNDERSTAND OUR PLIGHT AS LANDLORDS. WE'RE MAKING OUTRAGEOUS PROFITS, BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH LONGER WE CAN MAINTAIN AT THESE LEVELS....

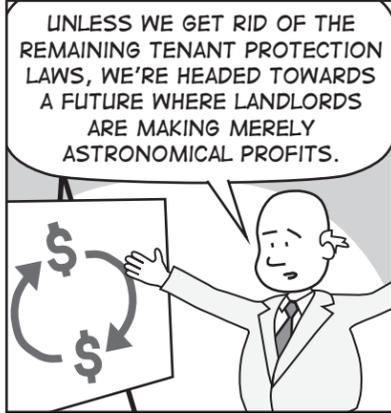


WE NEED TO BE MAKING **OBSCENE PROFITS**.

AS YOU CAN SEE BY THIS CHART, OUR PROFITS HAVE BEEN GROWING AT RIDICULOUS RATES.



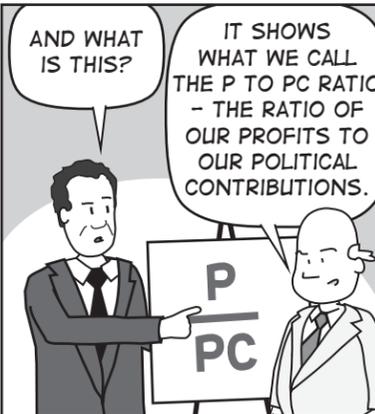
BUT THESE PROFITS HAVE BARELY KEPT PACE WITH THE TREMENDOUS RISE IN OUR LEVELS OF GREED AND UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.



UNLESS WE GET RID OF THE REMAINING TENANT PROTECTION LAWS, WE'RE HEADED TOWARDS A FUTURE WHERE LANDLORDS ARE MAKING MERELY ASTRONOMICAL PROFITS.



LANDLORDS ARE COUNTING ON YOU, MR. GOVERNOR, TO MAKE SURE THAT WE DO MUCH BETTER THAN THIS.

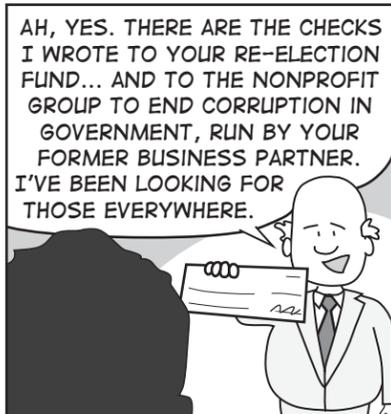


AND WHAT IS THIS?

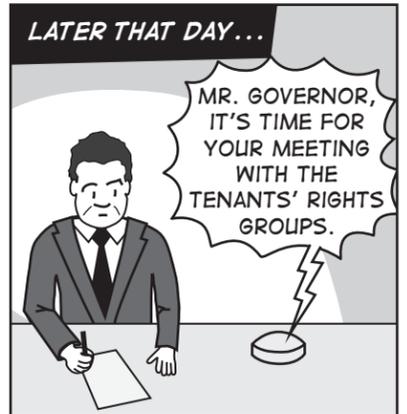
IT SHOWS WHAT WE CALL THE P TO PC RATIO - THE RATIO OF OUR PROFITS TO OUR POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.



MR. GOVERNOR, WHAT'S THAT BEHIND YOUR EAR?



AH, YES. THERE ARE THE CHECKS I WROTE TO YOUR RE-ELECTION FUND... AND TO THE NONPROFIT GROUP TO END CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT, RUN BY YOUR FORMER BUSINESS PARTNER. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THOSE EVERYWHERE.



LATER THAT DAY...

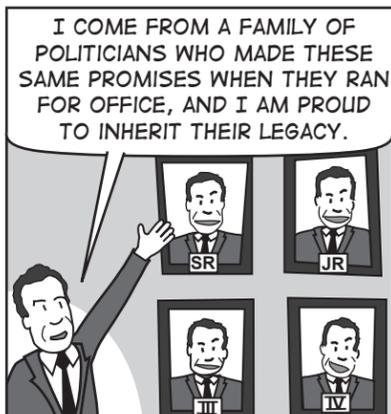
MR. GOVERNOR, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR MEETING WITH THE TENANTS' RIGHTS GROUPS.



GREETINGS, TENANTS. BEFORE WE START THIS MEETING, LET ME REMIND YOU THAT I'M THE STRONGEST SUPPORTER OF TENANTS' RIGHTS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAT YOU'LL FIND IN GOVERNMENT.



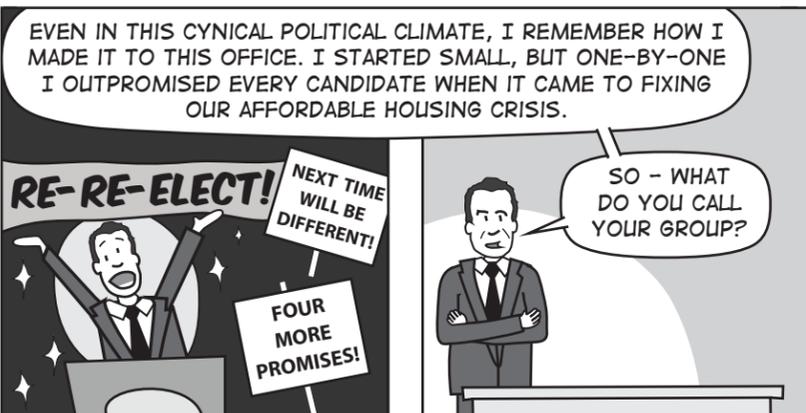
I'VE PLEDGED TO DO THINGS FOR TENANTS THROUGHOUT MY ENTIRE POLITICAL CAREER. ALL OF MY CAMPAIGNS HAVE BEEN BUILT ON MAKING PROMISES TO PRESERVE AND CREATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.



I COME FROM A FAMILY OF POLITICIANS WHO MADE THESE SAME PROMISES WHEN THEY RAN FOR OFFICE, AND I AM PROUD TO INHERIT THEIR LEGACY.



I HAVE DECADES OF EXPERIENCE MAKING PROMISES AT EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT THAT IF I WIN THE NEXT ELECTION, I WILL ENACT LONG-NEEDED REFORMS TO OUR HOUSING POLICIES.



EVEN IN THIS CYNICAL POLITICAL CLIMATE, I REMEMBER HOW I MADE IT TO THIS OFFICE. I STARTED SMALL, BUT ONE-BY-ONE I OUTPROMISED EVERY CANDIDATE WHEN IT CAME TO FIXING OUR AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS.

SO - WHAT DO YOU CALL YOUR GROUP?



WE'RE A CITYWIDE COALITION OF GROUPS. OUR CAMPAIGN IS CALLED "FAIR RENTS FOR ALL..."



**WHOA!** LET ME STOP YOU RIGHT THERE.



YOU KNOW THAT I'M ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THESE ISSUES, BUT JUST LISTEN TO THAT NAME. IT SHOWS YOU'RE COMPLETELY UNREASONABLE.



POLITICS IS ABOUT COMPROMISE AND RESTRAINT. "FAIR RENTS" IS SUCH A RADICAL POSITION. AND "FOR ALL"? HAVE YOU RESEARCHED WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION THAT INCLUDES? IT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT! MAYBE INTO THE DOUBLE DIGITS.



DO WE EVEN KNOW IF ALL THOSE PEOPLE SUPPORTED MY CAMPAIGN?



IF YOU WANT AN INSPIRING SLOGAN, LET ME SUGGEST: "SLIGHTLY LESS OUTRAGEOUS RENTS FOR A LUCKY FEW". THAT'S A BARGAINING POSITION YOU CAN START FROM. YOU'LL NEED A WELL-DEVELOPED LIST OF CONCESSIONS AND GIVEBACKS, BUT I'LL HAVE MY HOUSING COMMISSIONER HELP YOU WITH THAT.

NOW, ON TO PRIORITIES. WE CAN'T PASS ANY LEGISLATION IN THIS POLITICAL CLIMATE, OF COURSE. BUT THERE'S ANOTHER ELECTION COMING UP SOON, AND I NEED TO KNOW, IN TERMS OF THE ISSUES, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT ME TO PROMISE YOU THIS YEAR?

WE HAVE A PLATFORM OF LEGISLATION TO FIX OUR RENT LAWS, MR. GOVERNOR.

I'M ALREADY VERY FAMILIAR WITH THAT DOCUMENT. I HAD AN INTERN SKIM AND SUMMARIZE IT TO ME BEFORE TODAY'S MEETING. IT SEEMS LIKE THESE ARE THE SAME THINGS YOU'VE BEEN FIGHTING FOR YEAR AFTER YEAR.

I THINK I'VE ALREADY PROMISED YOU THOSE THINGS BEFORE - IN FACT, I'M ALMOST SURE THAT I HAVE.

I WANT FRESH IDEAS. I'M NOT GOING TO LOOK BACKWARD AND RECYCLE OLD PROMISES THAT I MADE IN THE PAST. MY CAMPAIGN FOR RE-RE-ELECTION WILL BE ALL ABOUT CHANGE.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET, I'VE ALREADY GOTTEN LANDLORDS TO AGREE TO A COMPROMISE.

THE DEAL IS: NO REGULATION, NO RIGHTS FOR TENANTS, NO RENT LIMITS. BUT LANDLORDS WILL SUPPORT A NEW RENT SUBSIDY PROGRAM. THEY DON'T CARE WHETHER IT'S THE GOVERNMENT OR THE TENANT WHO PAYS, AS LONG AS THE RENT CAN GO AS HIGH AS THEY WANT. THERE'S NO MONEY WHATSOEVER IN THE BUDGET FOR THE PROGRAM, BUT IT SHOWS ME THAT LANDLORDS ARE REASONABLE AND WILLING TO COMPROMISE. I NEED THE SAME FROM TENANTS.

MR. GOVERNOR, RENTS HAVE BEEN SKYROCKETING FOR YEARS, ESPECIALLY SINCE LOOPHOLES WERE CREATED THAT ALLOW LANDLORDS TO DEREGULATE APARTMENTS. WHAT WE REALLY NEED ARE STRONGER RENT REGULATION LAWS.

MY ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY IS NOT BASED ON REGULATING BUSINESSES. I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN SOLVE ALL PROBLEMS WITH FREE MARKETS, INCENTIVES FOR CORPORATIONS, AND POLITICAL RHETORIC.

LAST YEAR, I PASSED A TAX BREAK FOR ANY DEVELOPER OF LUXURY HOUSING WHO AGREED TO PUT A SIGN THAT SAID "AFFORDABLE HOUSING" ON THE SIDE OF THEIR BUILDINGS. THE BILL HAS ALREADY RESULTED IN THE CREATION OF HUNDREDS OF NEW SIGNS CALLING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO BE BUILT SOMEWHERE ELSE. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR NEW YORKERS** (Probably not you, though) BY THE END OF MY NEXT TERM, MY ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE CREATED MORE SIGNS SUPPORTING THE CONCEPT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAN ANY OF MY PREDECESSORS.

I'VE GIVEN HOUSING SUBSIDIES TO MINORITY GROUPS WHO WERE ONCE INELIGIBLE, SUCH AS BILLIONAIRES. THE NOTION OF "AFFORDABLE HOUSING" HAS EVOLVED AND BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE THAN EVER BEFORE. TODAY THE TERM IS ALMOST MEANINGLESS.

BUT ATTEMPTS BY RADICALS TO DEFINE THE TERM "AFFORDABLE HOUSING" AND GIVE IT MEANING ARE UNDERMINING EFFORTS TO CREATE MORE OF IT!

IF **ANYONE** IS ABLE TO AFFORD THE HOUSING, IT'S AFFORDABLE!

MY PLAN TO DRAMATICALLY EXPAND OUR AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK IS SWEEPING BUT SIMPLE: BAN ALL RESTRICTIONS ON WHAT THE WORD "AFFORDABLE" CAN MEAN.

I WILL WRITE LEGISLATION GUARANTEEING THAT ALL HOUSING, NO MATTER ITS PRICE, HAS FAIR AND EQUAL ACCESS TO THE WORD "AFFORDABLE". I WILL CALL IT THE **USE OF THE TERM "AFFORDABLE HOUSING" ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT!**

THIS WILL ALL BE A HARD SELL, BUT TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT. IF YOU HELP ME GET ELECTED, NEXT YEAR - OR MAYBE THE YEAR AFTER THAT - I MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE EVEN BIGGER PROMISES THAN EVER BEFORE ABOUT WHAT I'D LIKE TO SOMEDAY DO TO REALLY FIX OUR HOUSING CRISIS.

THANK YOU FOR COMING TO THIS MEETING. WE'RE OUT OF TIME.



WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

LATER... DON'T WORRY... LANDLORDS WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF AGAIN THIS YEAR.