



Assemblyman
Robert J. Rodriguez



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Affordable Housing in our Community



Lakeview Apartments

Last year, after much advocacy from tenant leadership, our office and advocacy organizations, we were able to maintain Lakeview affordability for the 1,000 residents who reside there. The complex was converted to Project-Based Section 8, making all units eligible for Section 8 subsidies. Additionally, 157



residents received rent reductions. This year, the complex is undergoing major renovations, where residents' apartments will be renovated as well as the interior and exterior surfaces. Resident leader Joann Lawson is working hard to ensure residents have a voice and coordinates monthly meetings for residents to ensure constant communication with the new management.

Ensuring Affordable Housing

State Budget

In this year's budget we included \$402.14 million for housing, which restored \$12.83 million for neighborhood Preservation Programs; these are programs that ensure New Yorkers have safe and affordable housing.

Protecting Tenants: To help enforce rent regulations and protect against landlord harassment, we have allocated \$13.5 million to the New York State Homes and Community Renewal agency: \$8 million for Office of Rent Administration and \$5.5 million for its Tenant Protection Unit.

Seniors and Housing: We want to ensure our seniors can stay in their homes and their communities, to this effort, the budget increased funding for the Expanded In-Home Services Program, bringing the funding total to \$65.1 million. The budget also increases the State's allocation for Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC).

NYCHA: While the state budget did not include funding for NYCHA in this year's budget process. We have allocated \$450 million towards NYCHA's 2.0 capital plan and we anticipate allocating additional capital dollars by the end of the legislative session in June.

New Legislation Alert!

Coop and Condo Tax Abatement Bill

We acknowledge that NYCHA needs dollars to fund the NYCHA 2.0 plan, to this end; I have introduced a bill that will create a consistent funding stream for NYCHA capital needs. I introduced the Coop and Condo Tax Abatement bill (A7092) last month. The bill aims to renew and reform the 1997 Cooperative and Condominium Property Tax Abatement.

This abatement, which is scheduled to expire in June, currently reduces real property taxes of condominium and cooperative owner-occupiers by 17.5% - 28.1% depending on assessed value. The top 10% of abatements currently go to about 32,000 luxury homeowners.

The bill will change the eligibility for the abatement and would redirect the tax revenue to be used for NYCHA. The revenue would be placed in a “lock box” that would only be used for NYCHA repairs and capital needs.

Currently, NYCHA has an estimated \$8 billion budget gap. The state has already committed \$450 million in appropriated funds. Additionally, the city has committed \$2.2 billion. If passed, this bill will get us closer to closing the funding gap.

The Citizens Housing & Planning Council estimates that this tax abatement reform could bring in \$173 million dollars each year, which could raise \$3.3 billion in bonded capital for NYCHA.

Reforms Coming to Rent Regulated Apartments

The new majority in the legislature is a major victory for the tenants who have fought for years to close loopholes in the current rent laws. Policies like Vacancy Bonuses, Vacancy Decontrol, and Preferential Rents create loopholes that landlords have abused to deregulate rent-stabilized apartments and harass vulnerable tenants -- the same tenants who continue to bear the economic burden of citywide rent hikes. I will be working with my colleagues in the state legislature to fight for the rights of our tenants, to protect tenants in their homes, and to preserve our neighborhoods.

During the first of three Assembly hearings on the rent reform package the testimonials were clear: reforms are needed now. The following are some highlights of the rent reform package that will be key victories for the rights of tenants in East Harlem and New York State.

Preferential Rents: landlords can offer discounted preferential rents when the legal rent exceeds the market value of the apartment. But when tenants renew their lease, the landlord may revert back to the legal maximum rent. For the tenant, this could mean a sudden rent hike of several hundreds of dollars, and that further leads to evictions, displacements, and the loss of rent-regulated apartments. Our community members have expressed fear that their landlords will retaliate with a sudden rent hike if they complain about the issues that they face in their apartments. We want to close this loophole, make preferential rents permanent, and protect our tenants.

Vacancy Bonus and Vacancy Decontrol: since 1994, a staggering 155,000 rent-stabilized apartments have been deregulated and transformed into market-rate apartments. We are exploring bills that will reform the vacancy rules that allow landlords to increase rents upon the vacancy of an apartment, or to deregulate them outright. We aim to close these loopholes to preserve the remaining estimated one million rent regulated apartments in NYC.

Home Stability Support (HSS): the housing crisis doesn't just extend to tenants in private housing, but also for the thousands of New Yorkers who have already lost their homes. HSS will implement a new statewide rent supplement for those homeless, very low-income families, people at risk of eviction, and people who have lost their homes due to domestic violence. This is a necessary bill that will help bridge the gap from shelter assistance to the fair market rents so that homeless New Yorkers may be tenants once again.

Visit the Assembly website for more information.



NYCHA Tracker

Last year, after receiving multiple complaints of heat and hot water outages from the community, we established a Heat and Hot Water Tracker. Using this tool we have been able to work closely with NYCHA to ensure outages are addressed swiftly. Additionally, we have learned that there are sometimes discrepancies between what NYCHA reports and what we are hearing from the community. We ask that you continue to fill out our survey, call or visit my office when you or your neighbors are experiencing an outage.



To report a heat or hot water outage, follow these steps:

- 1. Call NYCHA to report the outage at (718) 707-7771. Make sure to write down your repair ticket number.*
- 2. Fill out the following survey to report directly to my office about your service interruption <http://bit.ly/HHOutage>*
- 3. If you are unable to fill out the survey please call or email my office and let us know! My staff and I are here to help.*
- 4. You can reach my office at (212) 828-3953, or email me at rodriguezrj@nyassembly.gov, please use the subject line: NYCHA Heat/Hot Water.*

Affordable Housing Information

Housing Connect

HPD'S NYC Housing Connect is an online portal that simplifies the process of finding and applying to affordable housing opportunities. The Housing Connect Website provides information on eligibility guidelines, deadlines, and a database of applications to search for listings based on factors including neighborhood, household size, and income. If anyone in a family unit has a mobile, visual, or hearing disability, there is a feature to search apartments by their degree of accessibility. In addition, NYC Housing Connect can be utilized to update household information and to gather more detailed information on the housing process, providing resources such as an applicant income guide and a post-application timeline.



Resources

Getting Ready to Rent

Are you looking for a new apartment? Get ready to apply for affordable housing by visiting one of the locations listed below. There you can meet with a Housing Ambassador who can help you navigate the housing application process. Additionally, Financial Counseling is available if you are interested in working with a financial counselor who can get you ready to apply for housing.

116th Street Block Association, Inc.
55 East 115th Street
New York, NY 10029
212-860-4100

Hours: 9am-5pm, M-F (Housing Ambassadors)
Languages: English, Spanish

East Harlem Council for Community Improvement
413 East 120th Street
New York, NY 10035
212-410-7707

Hours: 9am-2pm, M-F (Housing Ambassadors)
Wednesdays from 9am-5pm (Financial Counseling)
Languages: English, Spanish