

Written Testimony from Vincia Barber of the 1616 President Street Tenant Association:

Good morning State Senators and Assemblymember. I am here to share my experience as a tenant living at 1616 President Street in Brooklyn, and why we must pass the full cancel rent legislation.

My building is owned by Jason Korn, who has been ranked as the worst private landlord two years running. My neighbors and I have been living through mold, constant leaks, no heat, and patchwork for years and years. Now, during a global pandemic, when so many of my neighbors and I lost our jobs, our landlord still demands we pay him rent, while refusing to make real repairs.

We said no more! We began organizing a year ago, and on [May 1st](#) decided to go on rent strike to defend one another who lost work and could not afford rent, and to protest the unsafe conditions.

Many of us have applied for the rent relief program through DHCR, including myself. To my knowledge, no one in my building, despite losing income due to COVID, received any funds. Furthermore, why would we want to further enrich corporate landlords like Jason Korn with public money when so many of us are in a crisis. Jason Korn, who owes over 50 buildings, has been taking our money and not investing in our buildings for years.

We were already in a housing crisis before COVID hit. And we need real solutions to protect tenants and create a working class based plan for recovery.

We have the solution, it is not more money for corporate landlords, it is cancel rent! I urge all of you on the committee to support new taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers, and to use these funds to cancel rent and mortgages for all tenants and small homeowners, create a fund for small and non profit landlords to run their buildings, and ask corporate landlords like Jason Korn to finally pay his fair share.

Support tenants like me and my neighbors. Who have to fight every day to get our basic tenant rights to good repairs and not having to live in hazardous conditions. Pass the **COVID-19 Housing Relief and Recovery for All** sponsored by Senator Slazar and Assemblymember Niou.