

My name is Elda Luisi and I am speaking as a beneficiary (representative?) of the good and hard work of Cooper Square who counseled and guided me and my neighbors during eviction proceedings with my former landlord

I lived at 225 Rector Place in Battery Park City for nearly 20 years as a good tenant keeping a clean, no need to repair apartment and always paying rent on time. In the middle of the pandemic, before vaccines were even available, my neighbors and I, mostly seniors living with serious health issues, were told we had to leave because the 421a program we lived under was terminated. Most of us had nowhere to go and were worried about being forced out of our homes during a global pandemic.

With regard to the housing connect program, I applied to at least 60 buildings in less than a year and either heard nothing or was rejected because I made too much or too little money.

Not only did I lose my home of twenty years, but because this program works so poorly, I struggled for years to find affordable housing and the stress caused a myriad of illnesses and financial struggle from fruitless prospects. 421a has failed me and this city and state. It is time to end this program.

421a is unfair for born and bred New Yorkers to find housing in their old age that's not a single room occupancy. Our quality of life is endangered and it's cruel. As a senior citizen, it was stressful to look for a new home because landlords aren't as quick to give places to seniors with limited income.

421a gives huge tax breaks to developers, but doesn't provide long term affordable housing to people who need it. as in the case of me and my neighbors; it has been shown to be enormously wasteful as well. It costs taxpayers over a billion dollars a year with very little affordable housing to show for it. ANHD, the Community Service Society, and others have done research that shows the scale of the problem. For example, in 2013, only 8.6 percent of apartments built under 421a were affordable.

Rather than revise or recreate 421-a, New York State should replace it with a program that uses those resources toward the development of new social housing and the preservation of existing social housing (including most urgently NYCHA public housing).

Thank you again for listening to me.