

2026 Housing Budget Hearing –

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Greetings, my name is Charlie Dibe. I'm speaking today as a member of Met Council on Housing, which was founded in 1959 and is the oldest tenants' rights organization in NYC. I am also among the majority tenants in my city. I have lived in the same rent-stabilized apartment in Brooklyn for over 12 years now. I've seen my neighborhood go through a development boom and change before my eyes. The only reason I'm able to remain in my apartment is because it's rent-stabilized. I want to press upon this point – from the perspective of landlords and many legislators, rent-stabilization is a number – the emphasis being on the word “rent”. It's something we see on paper as a regulated monetary value. It's often, misleadingly, described as affordable or “cheap” housing. But from the point-of-view of the tenant, it's the “stability” part of the phrase that needs to be understood and appreciated. I'm a freelancer, which means my finances shift from one year to another. I've been unexpectedly ill with and without insurance. But without question, I have a place in my community and my apartment is my home.

We can all agree that we are struggling through an affordability crisis which only highlights our precarity. Under these circumstances, we can clearly see that housing is foundational to be able to even address other problems in our life or for maximizing our potential, and it demands stability. Rent stabilization would give us the stability we need to build our lives. As Trump attacks housing funding and real estate keeps jacking up our rents, it's time for New York State to make rent affordable by expanding rent stabilization and funding HAVP. I want New Yorkers across to have the same protections that I do. Tenants fought a historical struggle to get Rent Stabilization, and it should be a point of pride for all New Yorkers. We must continue to build on it.

The same applies for the Housing Access Voucher Program. This a very recent hard-fought win by tenants. But all of us here who worked get HAVP passed know that that the program is inadequate without sufficient funding. And while I've talked a lot about the importance of stable housing, HAVP means the difference of even having a place to live.

Thank you