



Submission by Xaver Kandler, Political Director, For the Many

For the Many is a grassroots community organization that organizes across the Hudson Valley to pass laws and win elections that transform NYS. Every week, we lead canvasses where we talk with renters struggling with the results of our housing crisis: rising rents, homelessness, and housing instability. For example, in Kingston, rents have doubled since 2019 and homelessness has gone up 80% over the past decade.

In the past decade, New York State has made significant progress expanding tenant protections. However, the state must continue to support tenants through these three key actions: investing \$250 million in the Housing Access Voucher Program; passing the REST Act (S4659A/A04877A) to fix rent stabilization upstate and allocating sufficient money to the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR); and creating new revenue streams to be able to continue to fund these urgent housing needs.

First, the legislature took a powerful first step in stopping this troubling trend by creating a \$50M pilot for the **Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)** last year. As homelessness continues to worsen and the Trump administration slashes federal funding assistance for housing programs, it is critical that this year's budget contain the **\$250M** necessary to make this program a success. Currently, the demand of these vouchers vastly outpaces supply throughout the Hudson Valley and statewide, and the cost to counties of housing people in terrible conditions exceeds the cost of simply housing these individuals permanently through the use of vouchers and increased tenant protections.

Second, the legislature took bold action in 2019 to expand rent stabilization beyond New York City and its neighboring counties by passing the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA). With the intention of protecting their tenants, many municipalities such as Poughkeepsie and Newburgh have attempted to opt in to rent stabilization by conducting vacancy studies, only to face costly lawsuits by landlord groups challenging the minutiae of the studies in order to prevent them from successfully stabilizing rents. Other cities like Albany and Rochester have also conducted vacancy studies, but the results didn't allow them to opt in, despite both cities facing a housing emergency by many other metrics, and even being considered to be in crisis by the authors of the studies themselves. Therefore, despite the legislature's best efforts to



expand rent stabilization and many municipalities trying to opt in, only Kingston, NY has successfully done so after a series of expensive legal battles.

Thus, For the Many and the Housing Justice for All coalition are asking for the **REST Act (S4659A/A04877A)** to be included in the upcoming budget as well. Additionally, we are requesting to increase the funding for DHCR to administer rent stabilization in a robust and responsive manner.

Third, there is a great need for new revenue to adequately address the housing crisis. Luckily, there are common sense revenue raisers that make the ultra-wealthy and super profitable corporations pay their fair share. In particular, For the Many supports the [Progressive Income Tax](#), the [Corporate Tax](#), the [Capital Gains Tax](#), and the [Heirs Tax](#). Additionally, the EMPIRE Act (A4278A/S448A) would raise revenue while giving workers the ability to directly enforce their labor rights—a win-win in a time when more revenue is essential.

In conclusion, housing remains the largest single cost for our members and the legislature must take bold and decisive action in this year's budget to address the worsening crisis.