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Tenant *Inquilino*

Housing for people, not profit

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Metropolitan Council on Housing
339 Lafayette St.
New York, NY 10012

PERIODICAL

Tenants Make Case for Rent Freeze, Poor-Tax Moratorium

By Kenny Schaeffer

As the city Rent Guidelines Board moved closer to its final vote on June 20 for rent increases affecting 2.3 million tenants in over 1,000,000 stabilized apartments, tenants made a strong case for a rent freeze.

At the RGB's invited expert testimony on June 5, and at the public hearing June 13, tenants laid out the stark facts: Housing affordability has gone from bad to worse over the last eight years, and the Giuliani-appointed board, which is supposed to "prevent unjust, unreasonable and oppressive rents," has been asleep on the job. Landlord profits have risen 35% just in the last three years, following the drastic compromising of rent and eviction protections under the 1997 Pataki-Bruno-Silver deal in Albany.

On June 5, the RGB held a an abbreviated version of the invited expert testimony—which had been scheduled for April 30, but was canceled when Mayor Giuliani announced that he was going to fire RGB chair Ed Hochman, who resigned instead. Tenants were allotted only 60 minutes, instead of the two hours that had been slated in April.

Patrick Markee, policy analyst at the Coalition for the Homeless, documented the loss of 510,000 affordable apartments and the widening gap between median rents and household income over the past decade, leading to a lack of 400,000 affordable apartments for poverty level households. This has led to "an enormous rise in the number of homeless New Yorkers," he said; the population sleeping in city shelters has risen to its highest level since 1988.

Liz Krueger, a national expert on poverty, hunger and eviction protection, informed the RGB that steadily

rising rents, in particular the "poor tax" surcharge on apartments under \$500 a month, have contributed to a sharp in-

crease in hunger as measured by increased food lines at pantries throughout the city.

Gina Cuevas, Bronx co-

ordinator for the City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court, testified

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It Ain't Over Yet!

Raise Your Voice for a Rent Freeze in 2001!

Mayor Giuliani's Rent Guidelines Board will vote on rent increases for rent-stabilized apartments on Wednesday, June 20. The guidelines they set will affect all rent-stabilized tenants who begin or renew leases between October 1, 2001 and September 30, 2002.

Tenants must speak out and show up in large numbers to ensure the lowest increases possible in the coming year. It is especially important that tenants who are paying more than 30% of their incomes in rent make their situations known to the mayor and the RGB. Demand 0% rent increase and no "poor tax"!

✓ Write the Rent Guidelines Board *Before* June 20! (Also send a copy to Met Council.) NYC Rent Guidelines Board, 51 Chambers Street, Suite 202, New York, NY 10007

✓ Call Rudy Giuliani! Tell Him 3% and 5% is 3% and 5% too much! (212) 788-9600

✓ Attend the Final Vote Wednesday, June 20, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Great Hall, Cooper Union, 7 East 7th Street, Manhattan. (Call the RGB to confirm the day, time and place of the final vote: (212) 385-2934.)

For more information: (212) 979-6238 x 6, activemch@aol.com

Tenants 2, JTS 0

By Vajra Kilgour

Tenants at two buildings on West 122nd Street, threatened with eviction by the Jewish Theological Seminary, recently won an important victory in their struggle to keep their homes.

In May, the Appellate Term unanimously upheld Housing Court Judge Laurie Lau's decision that the seminary could not evict the majority of the tenants because at the time they moved into their homes, the buildings were owned by a for-profit shell corporation, negating the seminary's claim that as a not-for-profit educational institution it was entitled to refuse to renew the tenants' leases (*Tenant/Inquilino*, February 1999).

The decision capped a week during which the

tenants and the seminary were in conflict over First Amendment rights. On May 16, police threatened to arrest tenants who were trying to hand out leaflets at a dedication ceremony for the seminary's recently restored tower—which contains no housing—if they did not confine their activities to the other side of the street or to a police pen set up about 130 feet away from the seminary's entrance.

When the police proved completely intransigent, the tenants decided to go home and get their banners, which they then held in full view of the ceremonies across the street. On May 19, thanks to the quick and effective work of New York Civil Liberties Union lawyer Chris Dunn, the tenants

handed out leaflets in front of the seminary to people attending graduation ceremonies, without incident. The next day, they learned of the Appellate Term's decision.

A key component of the case was that the seminary failed to meet one legal requirement—that it actually owned the buildings when the tenants moved in. Pooling their money to hire lawyers Catharine Grad and David Weinraub, the tenants were able to amass overwhelming evidence that at the time most of them had moved in, the seminary did not in fact own the buildings.

The tenants' victory comes after a long struggle. They began fighting a Major Capital Improvement rent increase in the summer of 1993. In late 1995, the

seminary announced that it would not renew the leases of tenants who moved into the buildings after July 1, 1978—the cutoff date in the rent-stabilization law for the right to a renewal lease in buildings owned by not-for-profits. And it's instructive with regard to the importance of organizing to most battles that tenants in New York City face.

The organization that had grown up around the MCI was probably key to the tenants' ability to fight the threat of the complete loss of their homes. The relatively small size of the buildings—which have a total of 65 apartments—and the presence of some extended families and groups of friends and com-

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JTS

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patriots (many of the tenants are immigrants from Haiti or Africa) had always contributed to a strong sense of community, but the level of organization required to fight the evictions successfully would probably not have existed if the organizing had not begun before the seminary stopped renewing leases. Tenants who were not under direct threat rallied to the

1983, when they were transferred back to the seminary's direct ownership, have had to find new homes elsewhere. Although some were able to negotiate settlements that were advantageous, others have not fared so well. In particular, a tenant who broke ranks and hired a different lawyer early in the litigation process had to move out without any compen-

The level of organization required to fight the evictions successfully would probably not have existed if tenants had not organized against MCI increases before the seminary stopped renewing leases.

cause; those who were under direct threat knew that they did not have to fight alone.

In some ways, however, the victory is bittersweet. Tenants who moved into the buildings after

sation at all, because he lacked the resources to provide sufficient evidence to make the case for separate ownership.

As *Tenant/Inquilino* goes to press, the seminary has not yet moved to appeal the Appellate Term's decision, and the tenants see no reason why they should. "This decision feels right," says Alix Delinois, 21, who grew up in 515 West 122nd St. and still lives there with his parents. "It's immoral for a religious institution to try to get rid of people for no good reason. This decision feels just—it's righteous."

Complaint Numbers

The Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) has changed its Central Complaints hotline. The new number is: (212) 824-4328

The Department of Buildings has also condensed its borough phone numbers into one complaints line. The new number is: (212) 227-7000

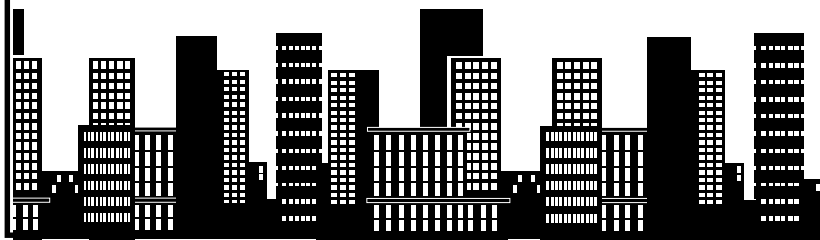
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Met Council wants to profile you and your neighbors' struggle to obtain affordable quality housing. We want you to write for *Tenant/Inquilino*.

For more information call Met Council 212-979-6238

Tenants' Rights

Every Wednesday 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Village Independent Democrats
26 Perry Street (basement)
212-741-2994



Met Council Volunteer Working Group Help Build Met Council!

Met Council holds open-house volunteer nights twice a month at our Fulton St. office. These meetings are task-oriented, focusing on the political work of Met Council via phone banking, mailings and letter-writing campaigns. At the same time, we hope to provide an informal forum for the exchange of ideas.

This will NOT be a housing clinic. If you have a housing problem and want to get counseled in person, visit the clinics listed on the back of this newspaper.

We meet the **first and third Tuesday of every month** from 6-8:30 p.m.

Met Council is located at: 64 Fulton Street, Room 401, Buzzer #9
For more information call (212) 693-0553 x 6.



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- Weekly Housing Court Decision summaries

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EL INQUILINO HISPANO

Inquilinos 2, JTS 0

Por Vajra Kilgour
Traducido por Lightning Translations

Los inquilinos de dos edificios en la calle 122 oeste, amenazados con el desalojo por el Seminario Teológico Judío, acaban de ganar una victoria muy importante en su lucha para mantener sus hogares.

En mayo, el tribunal de segunda instancia confirmó por unanimidad el fallo de la juez Laurie Lau en el tribunal de vivienda que el seminario no podía desalojar a la mayoría de los inquilinos porque en el momento en que estos ocuparon sus hogares, el

propietario de los edificios era una compañía de papel con fines de lucro, anulando la aseveración del seminario que como una institución educativa sin fines de lucro tuvo el derecho de rehusar renovar los contratos de los inquilinos (*Tenant/Inquilino*, febrero de 1999).

Se hizo saber el fallo después de una semana de conflicto entre los inquilinos y el seminario sobre los derechos otorgados por la Primera Enmienda. El 16 de mayo, la policía amenazó con arrestar a los inquilinos que trataban de re-

partir volantes en la ceremonia de dedicación de la torre nuevamente restaurada del seminario—la cual no contiene viviendas—si no limitaban sus actividades al otro lado de la calle o dentro de un encierro policíaco armado aproximadamente a 130 pies de distancia de la entrada al seminario.

Cuando se dieron cuenta de la intransigencia de la policía, los inquilinos decidieron regresar a casa para traer sus pancartas, que sostuvieron en plena

vista de la ceremonia al otro lado de la calle. El 19 de mayo, gracias al trabajo rápido y eficaz del abogado Chris Dunn de la Union de Libertades Civiles de Nueva York (New York Civil Liberties Union), los inquilinos repartieron volantes sin incidentes frente al seminario a las personas que acudieron a la ceremonia de graduación. El día siguiente, conocieron el fallo del tribunal.

Un componente clave del caso fue que el seminario no pudo cumplir con un requisito legal: ser propie-

tario de los edificios cuando los inquilinos se mudaron a ellos. Juntando su dinero, los inquilinos contrataron a los abogados Catharine Grad y David Weinraub y pudieron recopilar evidencias abrumadoras de que en realidad el seminario no poseía los edificios cuando la mayoría de ellos se habían mudado.

La victoria de los inquilinos viene después de una larga batalla. Empezaron a luchar contra un aumento

pasa a la página 4

Los Ajustes de la “Junta de Regulación de Renta” de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 32)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2000 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2001, incluyendo las concesiones de Pataki adoptadas por la Legislatura Estatal el 19 de junio de 1997

Los topes de renta que aparecen en el cuadro son los incrementos máximos que los dueños de edificios pueden cobrar legalmente por los apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad de Nueva York. Son válidos para todos los contratos que comienzan dentro del período de doce meses a partir del 1ro. de octubre de 2000. Los incrementos de alquiler basados en las pautas para la renovación del contrato de 1 o 2 años pueden cobrarse solamente una vez durante el período cubierto por dichas pautas, y deben ser aplicados a la renta legal estabilizada para el 30 de septiembre de 2000. Las cantidades que aparecen en el cuadro y los incrementos para los apartamentos vacíos no se aplican a los apartamentos que estaban sujetos a renta controlada en aquella fecha.

Los Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos o Nuevos En junio de 1997, el gobernador George Pataki, al intentar destruir la regulación de rentas, forzó cambios que les dieron a los caseros una sobrepaga muy grande por los apartamentos vacíos. Una cláusula de la “Reforma al Acta de Regulación de Renta” de 1997 permite que los nuevos alquileres sean incrementados en un porcentaje obligatorio: 20% para un contrato de dos años, y por un contrato de 1 año, 20% de incremento menos la diferencia en el tope de renovación para los contratos de 1 y 2 años. La nueva ley permite también incrementos adicionales para los apartamentos vacíos donde no se habían cobrado incrementos por desocupación por ocho años o más.

Sobrecargos de Renta Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros van a aprovecharse de la complejidad de estas regulaciones y subvenciones, así como del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus apartamentos, para cobrar un alquiler ilegal. Una vez que el

inquilino haya tomado posesión del apartamento, puede escoger entre llenar un formulario de queja de sobrecargo de renta con la oficina de la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal (DHCR), o disputar la cantidad de la renta en la corte de vivienda de la ciudad para que se determine cuál es el alquiler legal.

Si un posible inquilino da muestras de conocer sus derechos, lo más probable es que el casero no firmará ningún contrato con tal inquilino. Los caseros evitan contratar con inquilinos que les pueden dar problemas. El sobrecargo de alquiler es muy común. Todos los inquilinos deben luchar contra posibles sobrecargos. Obtenga y llene un formulario *Form RA-89* con la oficina de DHCR para determinar el alquiler correcto en los archivos oficiales. Llame a la DHCR a (718) 739-6400 para obtener un formulario.

La Apelación de la Renta de Mercado Justa Otro tipo de sobrecargo ocurre frecuentemente cuando se vacía un apartamento que previamente estaba sujeto a renta controlada y se alquila con renta estabilizada. La Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) es-

tablece anualmente lo que ellos llaman el “Tope Especial de la Renta de Mercado Justa,” el cual es empleado por la DHCR para bajar las rentas de mercado injustas de los inquilinos que llenan el formulario llamado “Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado” (FMRA). Según la Orden 32, es la Renta de Mercado Justa de HUD o un 150% sobre la renta base máxima. Ningún inquilino de un apartamento de renta estabilizada que fue descontrolado el 1ro de abril de 1984 o después debe dejar de poner a prueba la llamada “Renta Legal Inicial Regulada” (renta de mercado) que los caseros cobran cuando hay descontrol del apartamento. Use el formulario de DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indique claramente que su queja es tanto una queja de “Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado” como de “sobrecargo.” La corte de vivienda no puede tomar decisión sobre una Apelación de Renta de Mercado. Apartamentos vacíos que antes estaban controlados en edificios que se han convertido en cooperativas o condominios no se vuelven estabilizados y no satisfacen los requisitos para la Apelación de la Renta Justa de Mercado.

Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad: Las personas de 62 años o más que viven en apartamentos estabilizados y cuyos ingresos familiares anuales son de \$20,000 o menos, y que pagan (o enfrentan un incremento de alquiler que los forzaría a pagar) una renta de un tercio o más de sus ingresos, pueden tener derecho al programa de Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad (SCRIE, por sus siglas en inglés), si aplican al Departamento de la Ciudad de Nueva York Sobre las Personas de Mayor Edad, cuya dirección es: SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. Si el alquiler actual de un inquilino que tiene derecho a este programa sobrepasa un tercio del ingreso, no se lo puede reducir, pero es posible evitar incrementos de alquiler en el futuro. Obtenga el formulario de SCRIE por llamar al (212) 442-1000.

Unidades de Desván (Lofts) Los incrementos legales sobre la renta base para las unidades de desván son de un 3 por ciento por un contrato de un año y un 5 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. No se permiten in-

crementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

Hoteles y Apartamentos de una Sola Habitación Lo establecido es un 2% para los apartamentos de hotel de Clase A, casas de habitaciones, hoteles de clase B (de 30 habitaciones o más), hoteles de una sola habitación, y las casas de habitaciones (Clase B, 6-29 cuartos), sobre la renta legal que se pagaba el 30 de septiembre de 2000. No se permiten incrementos para apartamentos vacíos. Lo incremento estipulado no se puede cobrar a menos que un 70 por ciento de las unidades en el edificio sean ocupadas por inquilinos permanentes de renta estabilizada o controlada, pagando rentas reguladas legales. Además, no se permiten incrementos si el casero ha omitido de darle al nuevo ocupante una copia de los Derechos y Responsabilidades de los Dueños e Inquilinos de Hoteles.

La Desregulación de Rentas Altas y Altos Ingresos (1) Los apartamentos que legalmente se alquilan por \$2,000 o más por mes y que se desocuparon entre el 7 de julio de 1993 y el 1ro. de octubre de 1993, o en o desde del 1ro de abril de 1994 son sujetos a la desregulación. (2) La misma desregulación se les aplica, para el mismo período establecido en (1), a los apartamentos que legalmente pagan \$2,000 o más mensualmente aunque no se desocupen, si el ingreso total de la familia es más de \$175,000 en los dos años consecutivos previos. Para cumplir los requisitos de esta segunda forma de desregulación, el casero tiene que enviarle un formulario de certificación de ingreso al inquilino entre el 1ro de enero y el 1ro de mayo, así como someter dicho formulario al DHCR y conseguir su aprobación.

| Tipo de Contrato | Renta Legal Actual | Contrato de 1 Año | Contrato de 2 Años | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Renovación del Contrato | Más de \$500 | 4% | 6% | |
| | \$500 o menos (Alquileres de \$215 o menos se alzan a \$215 después de aplicarse los aumentos) | 4% + \$15 | 6% + \$15 | |
| Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos | Más de \$500 | Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años | 18% | 20% |
| | | Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años | 0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 18% | 0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 20% |
| | Menos de \$300 | Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años | 18% + \$100 | 20% + \$100 |
| | | Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años | 0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 18% + \$100 | 0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 20% + \$100 |
| | Renta de \$300 a \$500 | Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años | 18% o \$100, lo que sea mayor | 20% o \$100, lo que sea mayor |
| | | Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años | 0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 18%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor | 0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 20%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor |



Inquilinos 2, JTS 0

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de alquiler por Mejoras Importantes de Capital (MCI) en el verano de 1993. A fines de 1995, el seminario avisó que no iba a renovar los contratos de los inquilinos que se habían mudado a los edificios después del 1 de julio de 1978—la fecha límite en la ley de estabilización de renta para el derecho de renovar el contrato en los edificios propiedad de entidades sin fines de lucro. Y nos enseña sobre la importancia de la organización en la mayoría de las batallas que enfrentan los inquilinos en la ciudad de Nueva York.

Probablemente, la organización que se desarrolló en torno al MCI fue clave para la capacidad de los inquilinos de luchar contra la pérdida completa de sus hogares. El tamaño relativamente pequeño de los edificios—que abarcan 65 apartamentos en su totalidad—y la presencia de familias muy unidas y grupos de amigos y compatriotas (muchos de los inquilinos son inmigrantes de Haití o África) siempre contribuyó a un fuerte sentido de comunidad, pero tal vez el nivel de organización para luchar con éxito no habría existi-

do si no se hubiera empezado la organización antes de que el seminario dejara de reanudar los contratos. Los inquilinos que no fueron amenazados directamente se juntaron a la causa; los que sí fueron amenazados directamente sabían que no tenían que luchar solos.

Sin embargo, la victoria en cierta medida es agri dulce. Los inquilinos que se mudaron a los edificios después de 1983, cuando se les transfirió a la posesión directa del seminario, se han visto obligados a buscar vivienda en otra parte. Aunque unos pudieron negociar acuerdos provechosos, otros no salieron tan bien. Específicamente, un inquilino que rompió filas para contratar un

abogado diferente al iniciar los trámites legales tuvo que mudarse de su apartamento sin recomensa alguna, porque no tenía los recursos adecuados para hacer el argumento en torno al propietario distinto.

Al entrar en prensa *Tenant/Inquilino*, el seminario aún no ha apelado el fallo del tribunal de segunda instancia, y los inquilinos no ven razón alguna para que lo haga. “Siento que este fallo es acertado,” dice Alix Delinois, de 21 años, que se crió en 515 oeste de la calle 122 y todavía vive allí con sus padres. “Es inmoral que una institución religiosa trata de botar a gente sin razón, y por eso me parece justo este fallo—es lo correcto.”

Clavando una estaca: tribunal deja que los caseros eliminen descuentos de renta

Por Matt Pacenza

Traducido por Lightning Translations

El 21 de mayo, un inquilino llamó a la línea de emergencia del Consejo Metropolitano de Vivienda (Met Council on Housing) para preguntar si el casero podía legalmente dejar de darle los descuentos de renta que había recibido durante varios años. Al darse cuenta que el mercado de vivienda del vecindario se había elevado, el dueño del edificio quería alzar la renta de manera significativa, al nivel máximo permitido bajo las leyes estatales de regulación de renta.

No se preocupe, está a salvo, le dijo el organizador del Met Council Dave Powell a la persona que había llamado. Las leyes de vivienda del estado de Nueva York prohíben que los caseros hagan un cambio así hasta que el inquilino actual se mude del apartamento, explicó. La respuesta de Powell fue la correcta—hasta el día siguiente, cuando el tribunal de la división de apelación de la Corte Suprema de Nueva York falló que en cualquier momento que se reanude un contrato, los caseros pueden alzar la renta a la cantidad total permitida bajo la regulación de renta estatal.

Para los inquilinos de los vecindarios como Harlem, Bushwick y East Williamsburg, donde los mercados de vivienda, antes esforzándose para sobrevivir y ahora acalorándose, las rentas pueden subir al doble. Y como vaticinan unos partidarios, el fallo puede significar un incremento en el desalojo de inquilinos de bajos ingresos. “Daré a los caseros un incentivo fuerte para aumentar las rentas si hay otros inquilinos dispuestos a pagar el precio,” dice Powell.

El fallo de 3-2 del tribunal anuló un fallo por la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunitaria (Division of Housing and Community Renewal; DHCR, por sus siglas en inglés) de 1997, el cual rechazó la petición de un casero para cobrar rentas más altas a los inquilinos que habían pagado rentas llamadas oficialmente “preferentes.” En aquel caso, las

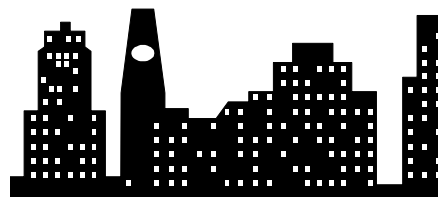
Hermanas Misioneras del Corazón Sagrado querían alzar la renta de un inquilino del Loisaida por \$70, un 5 por ciento más de lo que habían cobrado en los dos años previos. Ahora, la corte ha dicho esencialmente, “Aprovechese”: no hay razón alguna para concluir que “la preferencia iba a sobrevivir la recuperación económica del mercado de depresión.”

Aunque en el caso de las Hermanas el aumento es relativamente pequeño, los descuentos varían ampliamente. Rentas reducidas o “preferentes” son comunes entre los caseros que quieren “un arranque reforzado en los susodichos vecindarios pioneros,” dice Steve Smollens, un abogado que ha representado a inquilinos en disputas semejantes.

Los caseros, por su parte, aplaudieron el fallo, diciendo que las reducciones siempre fueron destinadas a ser de corto plazo. “Siempre me ha ofendido que el favor que le hizo un casero a un inquilino se volviera permanente,” dice Dan Margulies, presidente del Proyecto de Vivienda Comunitario, un grupo de caseros.

Mientras tanto, los inquilinos esperan que la DHCR apele el fallo—hasta el fin de mayo, la agencia no había decidido cómo responder—pero no pueden evitar ser escépticos. “La DHCR puede rendirse fácilmente,” dice Ken Rosenfeld, dirigente legal de la Corporación de Mejoramiento del Manhattan Norte (Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation). “Me temo que no van a oponerse a esto. Si permanece en vigencia, será un golpe severo para los inquilinos en los vecindarios que se están volviendo burguesas.”

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Do Single Senior Tenants Rent Apartments Larger Than They Need?

One of the most common myths about rent regulation is that there are scores of thousands of apartments rented by single elderly people who are paying far below market rent for homes far bigger than they need. One former Rent Guidelines Board member once justified his vote for the poor tax by speaking of the proverbial three-bedroom apartment on Central Park West inhabited by an aging “dowager” paying \$400 a month.

But according to data from the 1999 federal Housing and Vacancy Survey, released by the RGB as part of its “2001 Housing Supply Report” on June 5, 72% of the 238,000 tenants over 62 living alone in New York City live in one-bedroom or studio apartments. Only 4%—11,000—lived in apartments of three bedrooms or more, and almost 40% of those lived in unregulated housing.

“On the whole, this data contradicts the perception that single elderly tenants are in large numbers occupying apartments with many bedrooms,” the report said.

Of all types of housing surveyed—rent-stabilized, rent-controlled, Mitchell-Lama, other regulated, and unregulated—the percentage of seniors living alone in apartments of two bedrooms or more was highest in unregulated housing, at 43.5% of 38,000 apartments. Of the 112,000 seniors living alone in rent-stabilized apartments, 76%

lived in studios or one-bedrooms, and only 3,000 lived in apartments of three bedrooms or more.

The percentage of single elderly tenants occupying small apartments was highest in Mitchell-Lama buildings, at 87% of 13,000, and in other regulated apartments, at 88% of 19,000.

“In other words, about 67,000 households, or 3% of the city’s rental units, headed by a single senior could be considered underutilized,” the report concluded.

People over 62 account for 393,000 of the city’s almost 2 million renter households, about 20%, according to the HVS data. Out of these, 61% live alone.

—Steven Wishnia



STEVEN WISHNIA

“Are You Serious?”

Judge Finds City in Contempt for Failing to House People With AIDS

By Jen Flynn

On May 17, Judge Emily Goodman found the Giuliani administration in contempt of court for failing to provide emergency housing for five homeless people with AIDS. The city must pay a \$250 fine for each night any of the five is left homeless.

The five were among 17 clients of the city's Division of AIDS Services and Income Support (DASIS) who sued the city for failing to live up to a court order Judge Goodman issued in *Hanna v. Turner*, the 1999 case that guaranteed same-day emergency housing placements for homeless New Yorkers living with AIDS.

The city did not dispute that it had failed to place the five clients. Judge Goodman held off judgment on the other 12 affidavits.

Representing the 17, Armen Merjian, senior staff attorney at Housing Works, told the court how DASIS left them and many of their peers homeless. He explained to Judge Goodman how the city repeatedly sent people to the wrong address or to hotels where they weren't registered or that turned them away and to shelters, like the NYC Rescue Mission, which is a clear violation of Local Law 49.

The city's lawyer, Assistant Corporation Counsel Georgia Pestana, began by stating that Judge Goodman's previous decision under *Hanna v. Turner* was ambiguous because it stated that the city must “provide” homeless people living with AIDS emergency housing placements. Merjian tried to say that the city must “ensure” them emergency housing placements.

Judge Goodman, looking straight at Pestana, asked, “Are you serious?” Pestana went on to say that she looked up both words in the dictionary.

The proceeding was quick, but DASIS clients still have to wait for the judge's order to come out in writing and to see whether or not the city appeals it.

Local Law 49 requires the city to provide emergency housing to homeless people with AIDS. The

Hanna v. Turner decision came after AIDS activists and people with AIDS sued to ensure that the city wouldn't try sneaky backdoor tactics to try to avoid their legal responsibility to keep homeless people with AIDS from sleeping on the streets. AIDS activists then held a nightly vigil for nine months in front of the Amsterdam Welfare Center in Manhattan, the largest welfare center that is supposed to find emergency housing for homeless people living with AIDS.

Last month, Merjian filed to have the city held in contempt under *Hanna v. Turner*, on behalf of 17 clients identified by the DASIS Human Rights Watch at both the Amsterdam Center and the Bergen Center in Brooklyn. Their affidavits, supported by those of City Councilmember Christine Quinn, her staff member Emmaia Gelman, and DASIS watchers Bob Kohler and Jennifer Flynn (with background investigation from dedicated DASIS watcher Jackie Vimo), all stated that DASIS has systematically failed to comply with Local Law 49 and provide emergency housing placements to all New Yorkers living with AIDS who arrive at one of DASIS' 10 “income maintenance centers.” The affidavits state that the city violated the law by announcing in the welfare center that people “should leave, there'd be no housing tonight,” sending people to the wrong address for hotels, or sending them to hotels where they are not registered or the city hasn't paid the bill.

In April, the media picked up the city's practice of sending homeless people living with AIDS to high-priced luxury hotels such as the Sofitel. However, the real story is that most people with AIDS don't get sent to any emergency housing placements at all. The real story is not that the city has paid high hotel bills for a few lucky clients who spent a few hours in a king-size bed and a nice room, but that its constant refusal to provide emergency housing placements has never

been an issue of lack of funding.

In fact, on May 8, during a City Council hearing on the Human Resources Administration's budget, HRA officials testified that the emergency-housing crisis “has never been an issue of lack of funding.” (Two years ago, Giuliani

took over \$60 million in federal funds intended to build housing for the homeless and used it to pay the salaries of city workers.) At the budget hearing, HRA Commissioner Jason Turner also announced that DASIS will have \$9.7 million left over in city tax-levy

funds—money that that could have been used to create new housing for homeless people living with AIDS, but now can not be rolled over into the next budget year.

Jeri Flynn is the director of the New York City AIDS Housing Network.

Housing AIDS

By Jill Grossman

The city Division of AIDS Services and Income Support just might have to book a few more months at the swank Sofitel hotel for its homeless clients—and according to the groups trying to get them permanent housing, the city has only itself to blame.

This March the city issued a long-awaited solicitation for new supportive housing for people with AIDS, the first of its kind since 1997. It calls on the contractors to place at least 75 DASIS clients a year in transitional and permanent housing, either congregated in one building or scattered in apartment houses around the city. But after two months, not one group has applied. While they say the need is clear—an estimated 1,000 people with AIDS request emergency shelter each year—some of the city's leading AIDS housing providers say the fine print of the proposal issued by the Human Resources Administration spells trouble for themselves and their clients.

“Nonprofits are going to be punished for things that are outside of their control,” said Jennifer Flynn, director of the New York City AIDS Housing Network.

As with an increasing number of city contracts

for social services, the housing groups would be paid based on the cost of housing and predetermined performance measures. The measure of greatest concern: Organizations would be penalized if a client returns to the city's emergency AIDS housing system within a year of moving into the permanent apartment.

But AIDS service providers say these terms are unrealistic, given the tenuous circumstances of many of their clients and the fact that they'll be housed by private landlords. Falling behind on rent is common, either because of DASIS tie-ups or because a client becomes sick or relapses into drug use, said Regina Quattrochi, executive director of Bailey House, a longtime provider of housing for people with AIDS; evictions, she added, are a fact of life.

Making it even harder for tenants to stay stable, the city has committed to fund the nonprofits for just three months of support services, which include counseling and assistance obtaining welfare benefits. “We're concerned about our ability to provide quality services,” said Quattrochi.

The contract also requires that more than 80% of leases be made in cli-

ents' names instead of the nonprofits', a detail some organizations predict will create instability for the tenants. When service providers are responsible for the apartments, said Flynn, building owners deal directly with the groups if a bill goes unpaid. In this case, the clients, many of whom have never had their own apartment, she said, “are left to fend for themselves.”

To the city, however, the model makes sense, and HRA hopes the nonprofits will come around. “It doesn't make sense for the city to continue to pay for a paternalistic model in which clients are warehoused into apartments that are run by [community-based organizations],” said Marshall Butow, director of contracts for DASIS.

But the groups are waiting for some clarification before budging. “I don't know who they discussed these performance measures with,” said Quattrochi, “but I would need to know a lot more before I would enter this agreement.” Butow says that will come soon. His office plans to schedule a meeting with providers to discuss the terms of the housing deals.

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Driving a Spike:

Court Lets Landlords End Rent Discounts

By Matt Pacenza

On May 21, a tenant called the Metropolitan Council on Housing's hotline to ask if his landlord could legally take away the rent discounts he'd been getting for several years. Recognizing a jump in the neighborhood's housing market, his building's owner wanted to significantly raise the rent, to the maximum level allowed under the state's rent-regulation laws.

Don't worry, you're safe, Met Council organizer Dave Powell told the caller. New York's housing laws prohibit landlords from making a switch like that until the current tenant moves out, he explained. Powell's answer was correct—until the next day, when the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court ruled that anytime a lease comes up for renewal, landlords can

raise the rent to the full amount allowed under state rent regulation.

For tenants in neighborhoods like Harlem, Bushwick and East Williamsburg, where once-struggling housing markets are now heating up, rents could as much as double. And, as some advocates predict, it could mean a spike in evictions of low-income tenants. "This will give landlords a real incentive to jack up rents if they have other tenants who are willing to pay that price," says Powell.

The Appellate Division's 3-2 ruling threw out a decision made by the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal in 1997 that rejected a landlord's request to charge higher rents for tenants who had been paying what are techni-

cally known as "preferential" rents. In that case, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart sought to raise an East Village tenant's rent by \$70, 5% more than the rate they'd charged for the previous two years. The court has now essentially said, "Go for it": There is no reason to conclude "that the preference was to survive after the economically depressed market recovered."

While in the case of the Sisters the hike is relatively small, the discounts vary widely. Reduced or "preferential" rents are a common practice among landlords who want to "get a jump start in so-called pioneer neighborhoods," says Steve Smollens, an attorney who has represented tenants in similar disputes.

Landlords, however, ap-

plaud the decision, saying the reductions were always meant to be short-term. "It's always offended me that if an owner did a favor for a tenant, that became permanent," says Dan Margulies, president of the Community Housing Improvement Project, a landlord group.

Meanwhile, tenants hope DHCR will appeal—as of late May, the agency had not yet decided how to respond to the ruling—but say they can't help but be skeptical. "DHCR could easily roll over," says Ken

Rosenfeld, legal director for the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation. "I'm really scared they'll decide to not fight this. If it stands, it's a major blow for tenants in gentrifying neighborhoods."

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Attention All On-line!

If you have an e-mail address, join the Met Council "ACTIVE! list." We'll send you alerts about demonstrations, hearings and other activities.

Simply send us a message, subject heading "subscribe", to:

activemch@aol.com

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 32)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2000 through Sept. 30, 2001, including the Pataki vacancy bonuses adopted by the State Legislature on June 19, 1997

The above rent guidelines table shows the maximum increases landlords in New York City can legally charge for rent stabilized apartments on all leases commencing in the twelve-month period beginning October 1, 2000. Increases in rent based on the 1- or 2-year renewal guidelines can be charged only once during the period covered by the guidelines, and must be applied to the legal stabilized rent on September 30, 2000. The above guidelines and vacancy bonuses do not apply to an apartment which was rent controlled on that date.

Sublease Allowance

Landlords can charge a 10 percent increase during the term of a sublease that commences during this guideline period.

Vacancy Leases

In June 1997, Governor George Pataki, as a part of his efforts to destroy rent regulation, forced changes that gave landlords large vacancy bonuses. Provisions of his Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 allow the rents of apartments to rise by a statutory percentage: 20 percent for a 2-year lease, and 20 percent minus the difference between the 1- and 2-year renewal guidelines for 1-year leases. The new law also allows additional vacancy increases for apartments which have had no vacancy allowance in eight or more years.

Rent Overcharges

Tenants should be aware that many landlords will exploit the complexities of these guidelines and bonuses, and the tenant's unfamiliarity with the apartment's rent history, to charge an illegal rent. The tenant can choose between filing an overcharge complaint with the Division of

| Lease Type | Current Legal Rent | One-year Lease | Two-year Lease | |
|----------------|---|--|---|---|
| Renewal Leases | more than \$500 | 4% | 6% | |
| | \$500 or less (Rents that are \$215 or less brought up to \$215 after increases applied) | 4% plus \$15 | 6% plus \$15 | |
| Vacancy leases | More than \$500 | Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years | 18% | 20% |
| | | No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years | 0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18% | 0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20% |
| | Less than \$300 | Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years | 18% plus \$100 | 20% plus \$100 |
| | | No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years | 0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18% plus \$100 | 0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20% plus \$100 |
| | Rent \$300 to \$500 | Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years | 18% or \$100, whichever is greater | 20% or \$100, whichever is greater |
| | | No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years | 0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18%, or \$100, whichever is greater | 0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%, or \$100, whichever is greater |

cent for a one-year lease and 5 percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

Hotels and SROs

The guideline is 2 percent for Class A apartment hotels, lodging houses, Class B hotels (30 rooms or more), single room occupancy (SROs) hotels, and rooming houses (Class B, 6-29 rooms), above the legal rent paid on September 30, 2000. No vacancy allowance is permitted. The guideline is not collectible unless 70% or more of the units in the building are occupied by permanent rent stabilized or controlled tenants paying legal regulated rents. Further, no increase is allowed when the landlord has failed to provide the new occupant a copy of the Rights and Duties of Hotel Owners and Tenants.

High-rent, High-income Deregulation

(1) Apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month that became vacant from July 7, 1993 through October 1, 1993, or on April 1, 1994 and thereafter are subject to deregulation. (2) The same deregulation applies in the time periods set forth in (1) above to apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month without their becoming vacant if the total household income exceeds \$175,000 in each of the prior two consecutive years. To be eligible for this second form of deregulation, the landlord must send an income certification form to the tenant between January 1 and May 1 and file it with and get the approval of DHCR.

Housing and Community Renewal or challenging the rent in Housing Court to get a determination of the legal rent.

A prospective tenant who expresses knowledge of their rights will probably not be given a lease to sign. Landlords avoid renting to tenants who may be troublesome. Overcharging is very common. Every tenant should challenge possible overcharge. With DHCR, obtain and fill out *Form RA-89* to determine the correct rent from official records. Call DHCR at (718) 739-6400 to obtain the form.

Fair Market Rent Appeal

Another type of overcharge frequently occurs at the time that a previously rent controlled apartment becomes vacant and is re-rented as a stabilized unit. The Rent Guidelines Board annually sets what they call the

"Special Fair Market Rent Guideline" that is used by DHCR to lower unfair market rents for tenants who file the Fair Market Rent Appeal (FMRA). Under Order 32, it is HUD Fair Market Rent or 150% above the maximum base rent. No stabilized tenant of an apartment that was decontrolled on or after April 1, 1984 should fail to challenge the so-called Initial Legal Regulated Rent (market rent) that landlords charge upon decontrol. Use DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indicate clearly that your complaint is both a complaint of "overcharge" and "Fair Market Rent Appeal." The Housing Court cannot determine a Fair Market Rent Appeal. Formerly controlled vacant apartments in buildings converted to co-ops or condos do not become stabilized and are not eligible for a Fair Market Rent Appeal.

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption

Rent stabilized seniors, 62 years or older, whose disposable annual household income is \$20,000 or less and who pay (or face a rent increase that would cause them to pay) one-third or more of that income in rent may be eligible for a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) if they apply to the NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit at 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. If an otherwise eligible tenant's current rent level is already above one-third of income, it cannot be rolled back, but future rent increases may be waived. Obtain the SCRIE application form by calling (212) 442-1000.

Loft Units

Legalized loft unit increases above the base rent are 3 per-

Calling All Community Garden Supporters!

The More Gardens Coalition, along with gardeners and activists, is gathering signatures for a *People's Referendum to Save Our Community Gardens!* We are determined to make all community gardens permanent, and with your help, dedication and commitment we can. Our deadline for filing petitions is **July 6**, so we have to move quickly.

We hope to place the referendum on the November 6 ballot. It would transfer the control of the gardens from the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to the Department of Parks and Recreation. The decision was arrived at over months of discussion and debate with lawyers and committed garden activists. Here, in brief, is the reasoning behind the it.

In this election year it is vital that we place the fate of the community gardens in the center of the political arena. To date, the City Council sits on their hands, refusing to pass legislation that would protect these vital green spaces (See "There Oughta Be a Law: Intro. No. 742" at www.treebranch.com) Moreover, the majority of candidates do not answer when asked if they would support the preservation and creation of community gardens. Now more than ever it is clear that it is up to us, the people of New York City, to ensure the survival of our community gardens through concerted political pressure and strategic activism. Our signatures, our voices and our votes will make clear to politicians and developers our intention.

In 1998, Mayor Giuliani trans-

ferred the administration of the gardens from the Green Thumb program, a Parks-administered office, to HPD. The Mayor's office oversees HPD and approves sales of city-owned land to private developers for the construction of so-called "affordable" housing. This housing costs far too much for most low-income residents and working people, and is used to pit housing and garden advocates against each other. In reality, both housing and garden advocates believe in their coexistence (see housing/gardens at www.voteforgardens.org).

HPD plans to develop the gardens and has sent bulldozers to destroy dozens of the oldest, most treasured of our green spaces. Plans to develop all 400 gardens are in the works, with the Bronx gardens in the most immediate

danger. Currently, only the state attorney general's temporary restraining order keeps the bulldozers at bay.

Strategy

What we are attempting to do through this referendum is to return the gardens to the control of the Parks Department. This will not absolutely guarantee their protection, but it will remove the gardens from the immediate jurisdiction of their worst enemies: the deadly combination of Mayor Giuliani, HPD and developers. Furthermore, we believe that a vote to turn the gardens over to the Parks Department will serve as a very clear indication of the people's will. Any incoming mayor would be hard-pressed to ignore such a powerful mandate.

How You Can Help

✓ Become a petitioner by getting signatures for the referendum (don't forget to make copies)! You can get your friends to sign it, or people you know at work, school, church, or on your block. There are important rules for collecting signatures, so please read the detailed instructions and follow them to a T.

✓ Come to a "vote for gardens" meeting and get involved.

✓ We meet EVERY TUESDAY at 7:00 p.m. at the Sixth Street Community Center in Manhattan, 638 East Sixth St. between avenues B and C. If you can't come and you have a group of people who want to learn how to petition, we will come to you. Just call (212) 533-8019 to make arrangements.

We will also be canvassing at festivals and parades every weekend in June. We will meet at the mouth of Central Park (59th & Columbus Circle) every Saturday and Sunday at 10 a.m. Together we will learn how to petition, and then leave in groups to collect signatures at events throughout the city. At the end of day we can meet to drop off petitions and put our feet up at a community garden.

If you're a do-it-yourselfer you can easily DOWNLOAD THE PETITION, read the RULES, make bunches of copies and strike out on your own. Please call our hotline if you plan on doing this, so that we can arrange a pickup/dropoff of your completed forms. And, of course, you can always call More Gardens! at (212) 533-8019 or check out the Website at www.voteforgardens.org.

Call or write your political representatives and ask them to support this referendum and pass Intro. 742. To find out who your representatives are, call the League of Women Voters at (212) 677-5050 or go to www.lwnyc.org.

To find out more about community gardens, visit www.nycgardens.org

RGB

continued from page 1

eloquently about the hardship visible every day in Bronx Housing Court, where thousands of families face eviction because they cannot afford their rents, as well as how difficult it is to feed and clothe her own children as a single mother paying 40% of her income as rent. Michael McKee of New York State Tenants & Neighbors blasted the RGB's reliance on a price-index formula to guarantee owners ever-increasing profits, while ignoring the plight of the tenants the board is supposed to be protecting.

Met Council and the Legal Aid Society urged the RGB to freeze rents at their current level and to not impose the poor tax this year, allowing RGB staff and the new city administration being elected in November an opportunity to study the housing-affordability crisis and identify new strategies and resources to address it. Three of the four leading Democratic candidates for the mayoral nomination (Mark Green, Fernando Ferrer, and Alan Hevesi) have endorsed the call for a rent freeze, as has the Working Families Party's becandidate.

With the departure of three poor-tax supporters (Hochman, Edward Weinstein and Justin Macedonia) from the RGB, it may be possible to stop it this year. With four of the nine RGB members known to oppose the poor tax (tenant representatives Jeffrey Coleman and David Pagan, as well as public members Augie Rivera and Bart Carmody) it would only take one vote from the three new members to defeat the poor tax at the June 20 final vote.

Opponents of the poor tax point out that it falls disproportionately on those least able to pay more rent. Owners and Giuliani claim that it preserves affordable hous-

ing by increasing the rent rolls in marginal buildings, but present no evidence that the rental income in buildings that have one or two low-rent apartments is not already sufficient. Owners already have a remedy, known as the hardship increase, for getting additional rent increases if they open up their books and can demonstrate that the rent for an entire building is insufficient to guarantee a reasonable return.

Raising rents for all low-rent apartments, knowing that many low-income families will face grave hardship if forced to give their landlords another \$15 each month, is not a reasonable way to deal with those few hypothetical cases where the entire rent roll of a single building is insufficient. There are other means available to assist genuinely distressed properties, particularly in view of the announcement on May 31 by 120 groups—including the Coalition

for the Homeless, major banks and developers, and housing advocates—of an initiative known as Housing First!, calling for a \$10 billion investment in affordable housing.

Landlord representative Vincent Castellano asked whether the panel thought it was the job of the RGB to redistribute wealth. But by setting high rents, the RGB is enabling the redistribution of wealth from tenants to property owners. Three years ago, with an average industry-wide profit of \$250 a month per apartment, rent-stabilized apartments transferred \$3 billion annually to the real-estate industry (\$3,000 a year for 1 million apartments). With a 35% increase in profits since then, the figure has grown to \$4 billion.

For their part on June 5, owners presented an elaborate slide show suggesting that the way for the RGB to preserve housing affordability is to raise rents.



Tenants demand a rent freeze.



STEVEN WISHNIA

Tenants To HUD: Are You On Drugs?

By Erin Drasler

The political shakeup on Capitol Hill last month, care of Republican-turned-Independent Sen. James Jeffords of Vermont, has given housing advocates hope that their agenda may make it to the Senate floor. To drive those hopes home, hundreds of New York City public-housing residents descended on Washington that week to protest millions of dollars in cuts proposed by President Bush for the federal housing budget.

High on the list of programs to be slashed from the Department of Housing and Urban Development is the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, which sends the city \$35 million each year to combat drug use through beefed-up security, antidrug education and after-school programs at housing developments around the city.

Should the president and HUD Secretary Mel Martinez get their way, last year's \$310 million program will be slashed, and about half that will be funneled through the Public Housing Assistance Operating Fund, a general pot into which housing authorities can dip for anything from drug prevention to housing for seniors. HUD,

Martinez has explained, wants out of the law-enforcement business.

The city has anticipated some of these cuts by putting aside funds to keep afloat Operation Safe Home, a \$19 million program funded by HUD since 1981. A collaboration among housing and law-enforcement officials, it is meant to reduce crime in housing developments by financing police overtime, tenant patrol groups and drug-treatment programs.

This safety net will only catch half of the loss, however—and with Mayor Giuliani calling for a \$5.8 million cut in the city Housing Authority's budget, there's not much to go around.

Crediting the program for keeping kids out of trouble, Castle Hill housing resident Gerri Lamb certainly does not plan to take this cut quietly. Any cut "would be a major disservice to the people," said Lamb, who also chairs the Citywide Council of Presidents. "We want to reach as many people as possible."

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Help Needed On Met Council Hotline

No, it's not your imagination, it HAS been harder to get through on the Met Council tenant hotline lately. In recent months, we've been forced to run the hotline with fewer volunteers, which means that fewer tenants are getting the benefit of this crucial service.

We are looking for volunteers who can commit at least one afternoon a week to answer questions on the hotline. No experience is necessary—we will train you.

Our next trainings will be:

Thursday, June 21

12 noon & 7 p.m.

339 Lafayette St., Room 301, Manhattan
(6 train to Bleecker Street or B, D, F, Q to Broadway/Lafayette)

Please RSVP to Dave Powell at
(212) 979-6238 x 6 or activemch@aol.com

The hotline is, and has always been, a volunteer effort. So step forward, people, we know you're out there!

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

LOWER EAST SIDE BRANCH at Cooper Square Committee
61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2nd Ave. & Bowery)
Tuesdays 6:30 pm
Note: This office closes for the month of August. It reopens Sept. 4, the first Tuesday of the month.

BENSONHURST TENANT COUNCIL
1708 West 10th St., Brooklyn, 718-372-2413
Monday-Thursday 10 am-5 pm
Call for appointment.

CHELSEA COALITION ON HOUSING
Covers 14th St. to 30th St., 5th Ave. to the Hudson River.
322 W. 17th St. (basement), CH3-0544
Thursdays 7:30 pm

GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side)
525 E. 6th St. (btwn. Aves. A & B) Lower East Side tenants only, 212-533-2541.

HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA
Covers 135th St. to 165th St. from Riverside Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave., 544 W. 157th St. (basement entrance).
Thursdays 8 pm

LOWER MANHATTAN LOFT TENANTS
St. Margaret's House, Pearl & Fulton Sts., 212-539-3538
Wednesdays 6 pm-7 pm

VILLAGE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS
26 Perry St. (basement), 212-741-2994
Wednesdays 6 pm-7:30 pm

WEST SIDE TENANTS UNION
200 W. 72nd St. Room 63; 212-595-1274
Tuesday & Thursday 2-5 pm
Tuesday and Wednesday ... 6-7:45 pm

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL ON HOUSING

Met Council is a citywide tenant union.

Our phones are open to the public
Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m.

We can briefly answer your questions, help you with organizing or refer you to other help.

212-979-0611

Join Met Council

Membership: Individual, \$25 per year; Low-income, \$15 per year; family (voluntary: 2 sharing an apartment), \$30 per year. Supporting, \$40 per year. Sustaining, min. of \$100 per year (indicate amount of pledge). For affiliation of community or tenant organizations, large buildings, trade unions, etc. call 212-979-6238.

My apartment is controlled stabilized unregulated other _____

I am interested in volunteering my time to Met Council. Please call me to schedule times and duties. I can counsel tenants, do office work, lobby public officials, attend rallies/protests.

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____

Send your check or money order with this form to:
Metropolitan Council on Housing, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012