



**REAL
RENT
REFORM
CAMPAIGN**

Preserve Existing Affordable Housing to Slow the New York Housing Crisis

New York City and the surrounding counties have close to 1.5 million units of rent regulated and subsidized housing threatened with the loss of protections or subsidies that make them affordable. Vacancy decontrol, the 20% vacancy allowance, loose regulations and generous guideline increases have all contributed to the current hemorrhaging of affordable rent-regulated housing.

Vacancy Decontrol Bill S5149B/ A7416A (Passed Assembly)

- Bill would repeal vacancy decontrol in NYC and surrounding counties.
- Reregulates apartments deregulated after Jan. 1, 2007 or which were deregulated prior to Jan. 1, 2007 and which rented for less than \$3,500 per month on or after Jan. 1, 2007.
- Current law allows landlord to deregulate apartments on vacancy when rent reaches \$2000 – or landlord could charge \$2000.
- Current law provides incentives for predatory speculation and displacement.

RGB Reform Bill S 8235 /A 11097

- Bill would change board composition to 3 tenant members, 3 landlord members and 3 public members requiring a broader consensus among members.
- Expands qualifications for board members to allow experience with affordable housing which will reduce the number of bankers and real estate professionals on the boards.
- Requires local legislative approval of appointments.
- Requires landlords to file income & expense reports directly with boards increasing the availability of timely data.
- Prohibits rent increases for apartments with serious violations.

Saving Mitchell-Lama and Project Based Section 8 S5284/ A7811

- Places buildings formerly under M-L or S8 into the rent stabilization system.
- Applies to all developments built before or after 1974.
- Forbids use of “unique or peculiar circumstances” to obtain market rents.

Urstadt Repeal Bill S1673/ A4069 (Passed Assembly)

- Restores the right of Home Rule to New York City.
- Allows the New York City Council and Mayor to pass laws and rules on rents and evictions.
- Current law requires the passage of all strengthening laws by the state legislature and governor.

For more information:

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The Housing Crisis and Its Solutions

Tenants today

- Median annual income \$32,000 (rent stab) in New York City
- Paying 32% of income for rent (rent stab)
- 1/4 of rent stab tenants pay 50% or more of income in rent
- Facing loss of 30,000 Mitchell-Lama or S8 apartments

Rent Regulations and their Benefits

- Limits *rent increases* so that tenants don't have unexpected, extreme rent hikes.
- Gives tenants right of *tenure* – eviction only for good cause.
- Forces landlords to provide *services and repairs* while allowing them fair return.
- Preserves housing at affordable rents for future renters.

Weakening Amendments under the “Rent Reform Acts” of 1993 to 2003

- Deregulated apartments when rents reach \$2000 on vacancy.
 - Removed penalties against landlords for not registering, encouraging fraud.
 - Permanent 20% rent increase for all vacancies (vacancy allowance).
 - Removed brake on preferential rents.
 - Gutted registration system by limiting “look-back” on overcharges to 4 years.
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What Would Campaign Reforms Accomplish?

Home Rule/Repeal of Urstadt Law Repeal of the Urstadt Law would allow New York City (and other cities like Yonkers, if it chose to opt in) to control their own rent and eviction rules instead of relying on Albany powers and upstate legislators who are heavily reliant on real estate campaign contributions. The cities could put Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings with expiring subsidies under rent regulation; they could lower MCI rent increases, protect preferential rents, lower rent control increases, and limit evictions. The city could also respond as new market forces emerge in the future.

Repealing Vacancy Decontrol The state housing agency acknowledges a loss of 10,000 units per year of regulated housing due to high rent vacancy decontrol in NYC alone. Repeal would protect tenants in New York City, Westchester and Nassau Counties by removing the incentive of the \$2,000 target. Advocates predict a drop in harassment, as well as in aggressive, legal attempts to increase rents and evict tenants.

Restructure of the Rent Guideline Boards Common sense changes to the boards in NYC and the surrounding counties would allow for a more rational rent setting process. The expectation is that the new boards would respond better to the affordability crisis while keeping landlords earning a fair income. By removing renewal leases for rent stabilized tenants and the 7.5% increases for rent controlled tenants, the new system would make the preservation of affordable units more manageable.

Place Expiring Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 Buildings under rent regulation

Currently, post-74 Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings go into the open market at what every rent the landlords can collect at buyout. This displacement would be best stopped by continuing the subsidies that are currently in place. Failing that, if the buildings were to go under rent stabilization, tenants would be protected from market rents, which would preserve most of the 30,000 units that are now facing buyouts.