



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo: Expiration of Emergency Tenant Protection Act on June 15 Puts My District's Families at Risk of Losing Their Homes

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR March 22, 2011

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Queens, NY, March 22, 2011 – NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., (D-Queens) reports to his constituents that with rent regulation laws that protect over one million units of affordable housing in New York City and the surrounding counties (Westchester, Nassau, and Rockland) dangerously close to expiring, Senate Democrats have joined City elected officials and advocates to call on Governor Cuomo for the immediate extension and expansion of tenant protections.

To prevent the expiration of rent regulations and the most significant “tenant tax” in the history of New York, which could force over a million New Yorkers from their homes, Senate Democrats are calling for their Omnibus Tenant Protection Bill (S.2783-A) to be included in the Senate’s FY 2011-12 budget. The laws governing rent regulation are set to expire on June 15, 2011. Between 1994 and 2010, it is estimated that over 300,000 units of

affordable housing were removed from rent regulation.

Senator Addabbo states, “Raising rents on middle class and working poor families that are already reeling in this tough economy is like burdening them with a crushing tax that will drive New Yorkers from their homes. That’s why I support this legislation strengthening rent control and other crucial regulations that protect tenants and stabilize communities across New York. We must protect seniors, veterans, and the disabled from losing the very roofs over their heads.”

Addabbo believes the state legislature must extend and enhance rent regulation, and protect the shrinking stock of affordable housing. Without rent regulation, average working people or those most vulnerable could be priced out of New York City.

Senate Democratic Conference Leader John L. Sampson said, “To maintain our communities, grow our businesses, and keep middle class families in their homes, we must extend and expand tenant protections. If rent regulations expire over a million New Yorkers could be driven from their homes by a devastating tenant tax. Including tenant protections in the budget process will safeguard tenants and stop an affordable housing crisis from crippling New York.”

New York City Public Advocate Bill de Blasio said, “These laws are the only thing standing between our city and the largest affordable housing crisis in this country’s history. If we don’t act here and now, hundreds of thousands of working and middle class families could lose their homes. We must live up to our historic responsibility to keep the more than one million apartments under threat affordable.”

Key components of S.2783 / A.2674 are:

- Repeals vacancy destabilization or decontrol and re-regulates most of the apartments that have been lost through this loophole in the last two decades.
- Allows New York City and suburban municipalities to bring former Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings under rent stabilization.
- Reduces the statutory vacancy bonus from 20% to 10%.
- Reforms preferential rent loophole that enables landlords to increase stabilized rents by hundreds of dollars when tenants renew their leases.
- Reforms the provision that allows landlords to empty entire buildings by claiming they need more than one unit for themselves or their family members.
- Reforms the Major Capital Improvement (MCI) program by making rent surcharges temporary and which end when the landlord has recovered the cost of the improvement.

- Reforms the Individual Apartment Improvement (IAI) program by reducing the monthly rent increase from 1/40th to 1/60th of the cost of the improvement.
- Adjusts high-income deregulation thresholds to more accurately represent inflation.
- Repeals the Urstadt Law which would restore home rule powers over rent and eviction legislation to the City of New York.

Addabbo, “Our current, weakened rent laws have resulted in the loss of over 300,000 affordable homes for New York’s families since 1994. Because the vacancy rate is so low, tenants have nowhere to move and no affordable apartments to rent.

The landlords are in a position to engage in price gouging and other practices that are unacceptable even in a free market economy. We need real rent reform that not only renews rent protections, but also strengthens them by repealing vacancy destabilization.” The Senator feels that without these steps, over 1,000,000 families face unsustainable rent hikes leading to increased homelessness, destabilized communities, and the further erosion of New York’s economy.

“There is still over 8% unemployment in Queens and those who do have a job are working hard for the same or less pay while paying more for transportation, food and housing. That’s why we must not merely extend rent regulations, but strengthen them as well. I will continue to advocate wholeheartedly for tenant-sponsored legislation in

Albany," Addabbo concluded.

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