



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

## Hundreds From Across the City Gather in Harlem to Urge Stronger Rent Laws

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON June 16, 2011

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### *Major Rally Features Scores of Elected Leaders, Clergy and Tenants United in the Call For Renewed Rent Protections and Repeal of Vacancy Destabilization*

On Sunday, June 5, 2011, close to two thousands tenants from across New York City and the surrounding suburbs rallied inside a Harlem church Sunday, calling on the Governor and State Senate Majority to renew and strengthen the rent laws that protect 2.5 million New Yorkers. These laws expire in just 10 days and must be renewed and strengthened both to keep the rents affordable for over 1 million rent stabilized apartments and to preserve the dwindling affordable housing stock in New York.

The tenants, advocates and local clergy were joined at the rally by scores of elected officials, including State Senate Democratic Leader John Sampson, New York City Comptroller John Liu, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, and many more, making the gathering the largest of its kind in favor of strengthened rent laws and the full repeal of vacancy destabilization. Event host, Pastor Michael A. Walrond, Jr., welcomed the tenants to his church and led off a series of stirring speeches from elected leaders and tenants alike.

State Sen. Hassell-Thompson (D, WFP-36<sup>th</sup> SD): "The issue of rent regulation and protection is a defining one for the caucus and the communities we represent. The rent regulation legislation that has been introduced by the Senate Republicans weakens rent control efforts and allows for untoward loopholes in the law. A simple extension of the deadline is not acceptable. Tenant protection laws must be strengthened in a meaningful and comprehensive fashion."

The Harlem event was heavily attended by the members of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, showing again that the public demand for renewed and strengthen rent laws is particularly strong within New York's minority communities. A recent Siena Research Institute poll of New York residents showed that 85% of African Americans and 74% of Latino residents support extended rent laws.

The event, held at First Corinthian Baptist Church, was sponsored by the Caucus, as well as the Real Rent Reform Campaign and the First Corinthian Baptist Church. With the deadline for rent law renewal fast approaching, Sunday's rally marked the first of many tenant based action in the next ten days meant to show the Governor and the Legislature that the people of New York demand stronger rent laws.

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