



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Willets Point Businesses Still Left in the Dark by the City

TONY AVELLA February 28, 2014

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*Senator Avella stands with Willets Point Tenants to urge the City to reach an agreement*

(Bayside, Queens) Today, Senator Tony Avella joined Willets Point tenant businesses who have not vacated from the premises, at a press conference urging the City of New York to come to an agreement and end their plight once and for all.

The business owners shared individual stories of being shunned by City agencies involved in the disagreement.

Many tenant businesses have not agreed to the deal proposed by the Department of Housing and Preservation (HPD) earlier last year due to minimal compensation offered, which does not even begin to cover the high relocation costs.

Since then, the businesses have joined together under the leadership of Arturo Olaya, a business tenant who has lead the fight in trying to come to a mutual agreement to safely relocate, in demanding that the City allocate better funding for the Willets Point tenant relocation. Unfortunately, not only has the City ignored their requests, some businesses continue to be shut down by the City Marshal without compensation or any resolution in sight.

“Some of my members do not have money to bring home and feed their families,” said Olaya. “The City promised to relocate every business but many people are getting shut out of the process. They expect us to move our entire businesses for \$12,000 and then \$6,000. That is not enough money. What business can move with such a small amount? Now many businesses have been forced to close their doors, without any money at all.”

“Even though the City promised some money for the relocation, it was insufficient and at times, not forthcoming for these business who are struggling to make ends meet,” said Senator Avella. “To make matters worse, the City marshal started showing up and padlocking some of these business. This is unacceptable. The City is planning to give this property over to the developers, who could make a hundred million dollars, but yet they cannot take care of the hard working businesses that have been there for many years. This really a disgrace.”

Ms. Tana Quillupangui, speaking on behalf of her mother who owns a business “Emanuel Corp” recalled when the City forced them to move out everything on January 1<sup>st</sup> despite having no place to go.

“They lied to my mother many times. They told her that there are a lot of places in Queens where she can go but the reality is, there is no space in Queens for her,” said Quillupangui. “The City said that there is a place available for \$1,800 a month. When we went to see it, we found out that the space was not even for sale.”