



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

## Senator Espaillat and Councilman Levine Fight Tenant Discrimination

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT April 28, 2014



**Simone Weichselbaum, New York Daily News**

A battle cry to mobilize uptown tenants against a disgusting rat problem has ignited a potential court fight to protect foreign-born residents from what they say are bullying tactics on the part of the landlord. The campaign — unofficially called “We want the rats to

leave, not the tenants!" — hints at the escalating outrage aimed at GPS Realty. Residents claim the management team is trying to frighten longtime Latino renters into leaving 207 and 209 W. 107th St.

"It's harassment," said Jeffrey McAdams, a housing lawyer representing a Mexican family who claims GPS has asked for proof of legal status. "It's wrong to use their immigration status in order to use it against them to take away their home."

The family's saga prompted neighbor Abelardo Remuzgo to alert state Sen. Adriano Espaillat about the buildings' rodent woes and anti-immigrant intimidation claims.

Espaillat and Councilman Mark Levine fired off letters Monday to the state Tenant Protection Unit and federal Department of Housing and Urban Development asking the agencies to probe the allegations. "We cannot allow this discrimination to be tolerated," the officials said. Neither agency responded to requests for comment.

Residents, however, had plenty to say. The garbage started piling up in the hallways and on the nearby sidewalk in January, when GPS assumed management of the two buildings.