



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, Soundview Homeowners & Attorney Susan Chana Lask Announce \$8 Million Federal Lawsuit Against Unscrupulous Contractors & Nyc Department of Buildings

JEFFREY D. KLEIN February 24, 2015

| ISSUE: **CONSUMER PROTECTION, HAZARDS, VIOLATIONS, COURTS, HOUSING**

*NYC Department of Buildings, Contractors Allegedly Duped Bronx Homeowners Into Spending Life Savings on Unsafe, Uninhabitable Homes*

**NEW YORK, NY** – An unscrupulous contractor and the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) swindled Bronx homeowners out of millions of dollars by constructing substandard homes and failing to provide new homeowners with valid certificates of occupancy upon closing, alleges an \$8 million federal lawsuit announced today by **State Senator Jeff Klein (D Bronx/Westchester), Assemblyman Marcos Crespo (D-Bronx)**, the Soundview Homeowners and Attorney at Law Susan Chana Lask.

**Senator Klein said:** “The actions taken by unscrupulous Bronx contractors to dupe unsuspecting families into spending their life savings on uninhabitable new homes are reprehensible. Not only are these new homes constructed poorly and with shoddy, cheap materials – they pose significant health and safety concerns to the families living there. When scheming agencies and contractors prey on aspiring homeowners, they need to know that we will hold them accountable.”

For years, the DOB has permitted its licensee, Bad Ass Inc., to build unsafe homes across the Bronx that are not up to New York City building codes and as a result, cannot receive permanent certificates of occupancy. Under constant threat of eviction from DOB, Soundview Homeowners pay more than \$400 a month in upkeep to combat leaking roofs, cracked walls, irregular plumbing, black mold and improper insulation. What's more, because they lack permanent certificates of occupancy they are unable to sell or refinance their homes.

**Attorney Susan Chana Lask said:** "The Department of Buildings has ignored these people long enough. It is responsible for safe housing, not issuing building permits for illegal housing because its more concerned with its \$100 Million a year revenue while people suffer."

**Homeowner Johanny DelaCruz said:** "This has been a nightmare to me, my family and my children. We thought we purchased the American Dream, but the Department of Buildings and Bad Ass gave us a nightmare. We live in a freezing, damp uninsulated structure that is illegal and frightening."

**Assemblyman Marcos Crespo said:** "I stand today with Senator Jeff Klein and these homeowners to support this new filing and to fight for swift justice on behalf of these families. We can no longer allow unscrupulous individuals and shady companies to defraud those willing to invest in our community and make a commitment to raise their families in our neighborhoods. They deserve justice and today we take another step in seeking it!"

The federal lawsuit comes on the heels of a state lawsuit filed in Bronx civil court in December 2013, alleging contractor Bad Ass Inc. conducted an elaborate scheme to scam first time home buyers into purchasing unsafe properties. Attorney Lask recently requested a stay to amend the complaint and Senator Klein submitted a letter of support.

“I ask the court to grant the plaintiffs’ request for a stay in the proceeding so that new motion papers can be filed. These plaintiffs deserve their day in court.” **continued Senator Klein.**