



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Hundreds of NYCHA residents rally for a major investment from New York State to fix deplorable conditions in developments

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 16, 2015

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*State Senate Coalition Co-Leader Klein, New York Councilman Torres, the Chair of the Committee on Public Housing, and other elected officials back NYCHA residents call to fix developments*

Albany, NY— State Senate Coalition Co-Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres, Chair of the Committee on Public Housing and State Senators Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn) and Adriano Espaillat (D-Manhattan/Bronx), Democratic Ranking Member of the Senate Housing Committee

, hosted hundreds of New York City Housing Authority residents, organized by Community Voices Heard and Real Affordability For All, who rallied in Albany for funding in the state budget to cure dangerous and neglectful conditions in NYCHA developments.

The hundreds of NYCHA residents from all five boroughs filled the Million Dollar Staircase to represent the nearly half a million tenants living in NYCHA developments. It was the largest mobilization of NYCHA residents in Albany in nearly a decade.

“NYCHA residents live in deteriorating and unsafe buildings where conditions like mold, broken fire doors, leaking roofs, and falling plaster ceilings consistently plague developments in all five boroughs. The deplorable state of these developments leaves one thinking that NYCHA is the city’s ‘worst landlord.’ I’m proud that the State Senate’s one-house budget resolution recognized my call to invest in NYCHA with oversight and also offers developers an incentive to do expeditious repairs in exchange for a zoning bonus. Standing here with hundreds of NYCHA tenants and organizers, our voices will be heard: funding NYCHA, the city’s largest affordable housing stock, is a wise and necessary investment,” **said State Senator Coalition Co-Leader Klein.**

“Public housing residents have suffered deteriorating living conditions for too long. It’s time for the State to reverse the decline of our most precious affordable housing stock. I am proud to stand with residents, Senator Klein, and all of the state elected officials calling on Albany to reinvest in public housing,” **said Council Member Torres, Chair of the Committee on Public Housing.**

A joint-investigative report released in February by the offices of Senator Klein and Council Member Torres detailed dilapidated and dangerous conditions in NYCHA buildings. Recommendations in the report included state funding matched by funding from New York City, with an oversight component, to fix conditions in NYCHA developments. A NYCHA Repair Zoning Bonus providing developers an opportunity to earn zoning credits by making

quality, expeditious repairs in developments was also recommended since NYCHA repair wait times could take up to two years.

The State Senate's one-house budget resolution includes state funding through the JP Morgan Chase settlement for the NYCHA Revitalization Housing Fund, which includes an oversight component. The resolution also includes a NYCHA Repair Zoning Bonus.

"We cannot allow NYCHA residents to live in deplorable conditions. The State Senate realized the state of crisis our NYCHA tenants face. It's time that the State invest in NYCHA so that the thousands of families who reside in these buildings could enjoy safe, clean buildings where repairs are made in a timely manner," **said state Senator Savino.**

"More than 400,000 New Yorkers live in NYCHA housing, the State cannot continue to stand back and watch as the Agency's buildings deteriorate. The State must come off the sidelines and work with the City to reinvest in NYCHA, and make sure the investment goes to making the critical repairs that are desperately needed," **said State Senator Espailat, Ranking Democratic member on the Senate's Housing Committee.**

Advocacy groups like Community Voices Heard and Real Affordability For All would like to see New York State commit to a steady investment in NYCHA over a decade.

"We're here today to tell the Governor and Legislature that the state must start to pay their fair share towards preserving our homes. NYCHA matters for over 400,000 people and we need the Governor and Legislature to support that by committing \$1.2 billion in funding over 10 years," said **Ann Valez, CVH Power Member-Leader and Gravesend Houses Resident, Coney Island.**

"Public housing is a vital but neglected source of affordable housing for many New Yorkers. We cannot have real affordability for all until the quality of public housing is strengthened.

Stronger public housing is a top priority for us, and we are proud to help push for increased state investment in NYCHA developments,” **said Maritza Silva-Farrell, a leader of the Real Affordability for All campaign.**

“In 1998, New York State turned its back on NYCHA’s 15 state-financed developments, generating a cumulative operating loss of nearly \$1 billion by 2010. Its savings were passed on as costs to residents who faced accelerating deterioration. The State was a large part of NYCHA's financial problems. Now it has to be a large part of the solution,” **said Victor Bach, Housing Policy Analyst, Community Service Society.**

Other elected officials joined the hundreds of tenants on the Million Dollar Staircase to support their effort.

“Clean and safe public housing is the cornerstone of our communities, and it currently is in an appalling state. It is absolutely critical that New York looks at this as a crisis and provides the necessary funds for NYCHA to begin to remedy its properties. These are the homes to over half a million hardworking residents and their families and they deserve better!” **said State Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson (D-Mount Vernon/Bronx).**

“The state of disrepair at NYCHA complexes in my district and across the city is nothing short of scandalous. Families who live in NYCHA residences deserve to have safe and habitable places to live and it's crucial we use proceeds from the bank settlement funds to shore up our decaying public housing infrastructure,” **said State Senator Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan).**

“I thank Senator Klein for helping organize and I look forward to working with him on saving and expanding NYCHA,” **said Senator James Sanders (D-Queens).**

“For too long, New York State has failed to meet its obligation to my constituents and all New Yorkers who depend on public housing. Albany must fund NYCHA because my

neighbors have the right to a home that is clean, safe and worth the dignity that they deserve,” **said Assemblyman Victor Pichardo (D-Bronx).**

“New York's housing crisis has made our state one of the least affordable in the nation. Over half of New York City's renters cannot afford a modest two bedroom apartment. I am committed to helping relieve the burden on struggling families who are often unable to make ends meet because of skyrocketing housing costs. We must find a balanced approach to keeping housing affordable while continuing to allow development that does not displace our communities,” **said Assistant Speaker Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz (D-Brooklyn).**

“The residents of the more than 11,000 NYCHA units in our 79th assembly district deserve to live in dignity and respect. Living without heat but with mold, entering a building with broken security locks on the door or an apartment without hot water are unacceptable conditions for anyone. I am absolutely committed to ensuring substantial funding and improvement of NYCHA services for the people, and I congratulate our colleagues in government, Community Voices Heard and Real Affordability For All for their leadership and conviction to stand up for NYCHA residents,” **said Assemblyman Michael Blake (D-Bronx).**