



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## State Senator Gustavo Rivera Calls For An Investigation After Recent Outbreak of a Vermin-Borne Illness in the Bronx

GUSTAVO RIVERA February 17, 2017

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC HEALTH, HOUSING, VERMIN BORNE ILLNESS, LEPTOSPIROSIS, VED PARKASH**

*Requests that the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development to Launch a Full and Exhaustive Investigation into 750 Grand Concourse and All Other Properties Owned by Ved Parkash*

**(Bronx, NY)**- State Senator Gustavo Rivera released the following statement after one individual perished and two others were hospitalized in the Bronx after contracting leptospirosis, a vermin-borne infection, through the exposure to rat urine. One of the non-fatal victims is a resident of 750 Grand Concourse, whose owner Ved Parkash, has been identified on multiple occasions as one of New York City's worst landlords.

In an effort to help prevent similar tragedies from occurring in known vermin-infested buildings, State Senator Rivera, the Ranking Member of the New York State Senate Health Committee, has penned a letter to the New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Commissioner Mary Bassett and New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer, calling on the two agencies to work collaboratively in launching a complete and exhaustive investigation of all of the residential buildings owned by Ved Parkash and to create and implement a

comprehensive plan of action that will effectively address the current vermin infestations in such buildings. The letter also calls on the two agencies to implement a similar plan for the City's shelter system and the other landlords who are a part of the Worst Landlords List given that these residences tend to also have substantial outstanding violations pertaining to vermin infestation.

"As the Ranking Member of Senate Health Committee and as a Bronx elected representative, I find these incidents alarming, disturbing and frankly outrageous. Unsurprisingly, Mr. Parkash continues to show an utter disdain for his tenants and the law given the long list of unresolved violations that continue to plague his buildings. As a City, we cannot stand by while Mr. Parkash, and other landlords who neglect to address housing violations, continue to deliberately put at risk the health of tenants without any consequences. It is my hope that through this letter, both the DOHMH and HPD will launch a full investigation that will put in place a comprehensive plan of action that holds landlords accountable when it comes to addressing housing violations and providing basic health standards in residential buildings. No tenant should feel unsafe in their own home and I'm committed to work with both city agencies, community partners and constituents to ensure that every Bronx resident enjoys of a healthy and safe home environment."

To read State Senator Gustavo Rivera's full letter to DOHMH Commissioner, Mary Bassett and HPD Commissioner, Maria Torres-Springer, please see attachment.