



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Benjamin

Statement from New York State Senator Brian A. Benjamin at the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal Maximum Base Rent Public Hearing

BRIAN BENJAMIN November 29, 2017

| ISSUE: **RENT CONTROL, AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

As the New York State Senator for Harlem, East Harlem and the Upper West Side, the issue that my constituents bring to my office most is housing. Before I was elected to the State Senate, I built affordable housing in Harlem, and so I know first hand that we cannot simply build our way out of the affordable housing crisis we are currently experiencing—it is essential that we work proactively to ensure that residents can remain in apartments in which they currently reside. This includes preserving the affordability of Rent Controlled apartments.

Unfortunately, of the nearly 650,000 Rent Controlled apartments in New York City in 1975, only around 25,000 remain. Most of my constituents who still call these apartments home are seniors living on fixed incomes who have been living in and contributing to their neighborhoods their whole lives. Some are already paying as much as 80% of their income on their rent, and so an increase in their rent would be devastating.

The economic conditions that led to a rent freeze in 2015 and 2016, a 1% increase in 2014, and a 1.25% increase in 2017 for tenants in Rent Stabilized apartments exist for tenants in Rent Controlled apartments as well. However, during that same period, the Maximum Base Rent

for Rent Controlled tenants increased far more dramatically. If we are serious about preserving New York's affordability, we cannot allow that to happen again.

If the rent of these apartments continues to increase at the rate it has in the past, the apartments will no longer be affordable, and we will have lost a vital part of our city's housing stock. In doing so, we will also negatively impact the quality of life of some of the most vulnerable among us, and do a great deal of harm to the character and institutional memory of our neighborhoods. The victims of this tragedy will be the hundred-year-old woman who might lose her lifelong home, the mother caring for her disabled daughter who cannot afford to move, and the countless New Yorkers who are a vital part of the fabric of our communities who will be torn away. Therefore, I am proud to have joined Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal as the Senate sponsor of a bill that would create a parity between Rent Controlled and Rent Stabilized rent increases, and I am proud to join her today in demanding that there be a rent freeze for tenants of Rent Controlled apartments this cycle.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S6925

- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly

- In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to the establishment of rent adjustments; repealer

October 20, 2017

In Senate Committee [Housing, Construction and Community Development](#)

Sponsored by [Brian Benjamin](#)

Do you support this bill?