



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Alessandra Biaggi

## NYS SENATOR ALESSANDRA BIAGGI ISSUES STATEMENT ON THE PASSAGE OF EMERGENCY RENT RELIEF ACT, CALLS FOR FULL RENT AND MORTGAGE SUSPENSION

ALESSANDRA BIAGGI May 28, 2020

**ALBANY, NY** – Today, May 28th, the New York State Legislature passed a bill ([S8419](#)) to enact the Emergency Rent Relief Act of 2020. This bill will provide rental assistance vouchers to landlords on behalf of tenants who have experienced an increase in rent burden due to a loss of income resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will be administered through the NYS Division of Homes and Community Renewal (DHCR). \$100,000,000 will be allocated towards this program. The coverage period spans April 1st, 2020 through July 31st, 2020.

It is estimated that the bill will provide relief for between 25,000 to 40,000 New Yorkers statewide. Households are eligible for rental relief if: (1) their household income is below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) prior to March 7th, 2020 and at the time of application; (2) such household has a rent burden both prior to March 7th and at the time of application (a tenant has a rent burden if their rent is more than 30% of the household income), and lastly (3) such household has lost income during the covered period. The subsidy is effectuated as a voucher that is paid directly to landlords to bridge the financial gap between an individual's pre-COVID rent burden and their new rent burden, up to 125% of the Fair Market Rent (FMR). The act does not cover NYCHA residents.

**State Senator Alessandra Biaggi (D-Bronx/Westchester) issued the following statement:**

“Today we took our first step to address the rent crisis New York is currently facing, and I take full accountability for my vote.

I am not under any illusion that this bill is satisfactory. Millions of New Yorkers are struggling to make their rent payments and simply survive – this legislation does not come close to providing the necessary relief. The Emergency Rent Relief Act’s limited scope offers assistance to only a marginal number of New Yorkers, leaving many with little to no recourse. I share in the same disappointment that so many renters and advocates have rightfully expressed. But our fight for housing justice is not over yet.

The passage of this bill does not waive our inherent responsibility to provide meaningful relief for every New Yorker – we must and will take bold action to ensure the safety and housing security of our neighbors, and the survival of our small businesses. It is unfathomable to ask at least 1.9 million jobless New Yorkers, and thousands of small businesses who have had to shut their doors, to keep paying their rent and mortgages without a steady income or stream of revenue. Suspending rent and mortgage payments for New Yorkers struggling from the impact of COVID-19 is one of the most efficient, effective, and human-centered ways we can provide relief. The legislative session is not over – we will be back to deliver for our communities.”

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