



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## LES Officials Request Rent Break for Public Housing Residents Impacted by Gas Shut Off

BRIAN KAVANAGH August 3, 2020

| ISSUE: **NYCHA, HOUSING, RENT, TENANTS, FOOD**

| COMMITTEE: **HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**



On August 3, 2020, Senator Kavanagh and colleagues requested that the New York City Housing Authority provide the 474 households that reside in Samuel Gompers Houses with a 20% rent abatement for each of the seven months beginning last fall during which tenants had no cooking gas. The text of the letter is below; the original may be viewed via the link above.

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August 3, 2020

Gregory Russ

Chair and Chief Executive Officer

New York City Housing Authority

250 Broadway

New York, NY 10007

VIA EMAIL

Dear Chairman Russ:

As you know, the residents of Samuel Gompers Houses, located in our respective districts, had no cooking gas for a period of 7 months from late September 2019 to mid-May 2020, including during many cultural and religious holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Lunar New Years. With limited means to prepare home cooked meals, families in the 474 unit complex were forced to spend money on takeout, which presented a significant hardship.

As the representatives of these residents, we write on their behalf to seek a retroactive 20 percent rent abatement for each month they were without gas. We write to you today, because it was the negligence of the construction management crew hired by NYCHA that forced Con Edison to shut down the gas lines to the Gompers Houses in order to ensure residents' safety. Therefore, we feel, the abatement should be deducted from residents' future rent payments to NYCHA and be prorated for any tenant (including those whose tenancies ended during the outage) who were not in place for the entire 7 months without gas.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would like to receive a response by August 15, 2020 so we can have closure on this issue. If you or your staff would like to discuss this

proposal, please feel free to contact any of us directly or via Jackson Fischer-Ward in Assemblymember Epstein's office at 212-979-9696, Greer Mayhew in Senator Kavanagh's office at 212-298-5565, Pedro Carrillo in Councilmember Rivera's office at 212-677-1077, or Iris Quinoñes in Congresswoman Velázquez's office at 212-619-2606.

Sincerely,

Harvey Epstein  
Assemblymember  
District 74

Nydia Velázquez  
Member of Congress  
District 7

Brian Kavanagh  
State Senator  
District 26

Carlina Rivera  
Councilmember  
District 3