



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Deputy Leader Gianaris Announces Senate Passes NYCHA Utility Accountability Act, Providing Rent Relief For Tenants Experiencing Outages

MICHAEL GIANARIS May 23, 2022

| ISSUE: [NYCHA](#), [NYCHA UTILITY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT](#), [UTILITIES](#), [CON EDISON](#)



ALBANY – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris announced the Senate passed his [NYCHA Utility Accountability Act \(S.1603/A.1866\)](#), which pro-rates rent for NYCHA tenants who experience long-term water, gas, electric, and heat outages. The legislation was prompted by a three-month long gas outage experienced by tenants at Astoria Houses in Senator Gianaris’ district.

“Months-long utility outages are unacceptable for any New Yorker, whether in private or public housing,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “NYCHA residents should not be expected to pay full

rent, which typically includes utilities, when they are not receiving the service. My proposal would ensure we treat all our neighbors with respect and create financial urgency for NYCHA to make needed repairs on a faster timeline. I am pleased the Senate is passing this legislation.”

Senator Gianaris’ NYCHA Utility Accountability Act would reduce a tenant’s rent obligation in an amount prorated per day of utility outage by the greater of 10% of the tenant’s actual rent or \$75 per month. Affected utilities include gas, heat, water, and electric service. In addition to providing relief for impacted tenants, this legislation would provide a financial incentive to fix service more quickly.

Senator Gianaris has been a longtime advocate of improving quality of life for NYCHA tenants. He has secured major funding for a job training program for NYCHA residents through a partnership with LaGuardia Community College and Urban Upbound. When NYCHA failed to successfully test for lead in Queensbridge Houses, Senator Gianaris went in and performed tests himself and pushed for faster lead testing in these developments.

Assembly Member Khaleel Anderson, who sponsors the legislation in the State Assembly, said, “I am proud to see my NYCHA Utility Accountability Act has passed in the Senate, championed by my colleague Senator Michael Gianaris. I commend the Deputy Majority Leader for his work and commitment to public housing residents. NYCHA anchors working class-families by facilitating access to critical social and community services – and our neighbors living in NYCHA housing deserve reliable utilities and elected public servants that will hold the agency to a high standard. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the State Assembly in order to pass A.1866 in our house.”

Corinne Woods-Haynes, President of the Queensbridge Houses Tenants Association said, “We would like to thank Senator Mike Gianaris for his commitment and the work to ensure residents are compensated with their rent when they experience power outages, with the NYCHA utilities ACT and his continued support matters concerning NYCHA residents throughout our city.”

Vanessa Jones-Hall, President of the Astoria Houses Tenants Association said, “This is a major break through. We have had and currently have residents without gas for several months at a time. These residents has and are struggling with food disparities due to the pandemic (lost of jobs and lives). We have had and now still have residents who are trying to cook meals for their families on a hot plates. Great news!”

Carol Wilkins, President of the Ravenswood Houses Tenants Association said, “Yes, Senator Gianaris! "Great!!!!" Thanks so much for listening to us the residents who are the only ONES that are consistent in NYCHA. Thank you for listening to us when others seemed to give us a deaf ear. Thank you and to those who have listened and helped to make this a reality.”

Marquis Jenkins Lead Organizer for Residents to Preserve Public Housing (RPPH) said, “For too long, NYCHA has broken the promise and legal obligation of providing residents with quality and adequate services for their gas, electricity, and water. Requiring residents to pay full rent when they don’t have heat, hot water, or cooking gas is unacceptable! Thank you Senator Gianaris for supporting NYCHA residents and understanding that NYCHA needs to be held accountable when they can’t deliver the basic most essential need—utilities!”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S1603

- 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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[Enacts the NYCHA utility accountability act](#)

January 14, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?