



Gladys Puglla - Make the Road NY Member, Bushwick, NY

Feb 18, 2025 Housing, Aging and Social Services hearing

Good morning, my name is Gladys Puglla and I have been a tenant in Bushwick, NY for over 25 years. I am a member of Make the Road New York and want to thank you for inviting me to give my testimony. I am going to share my experience as a recently evicted tenant and the importance of passing the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP).

Like many fellow New Yorkers, I have struggled with increasing rent prices and the lack of affordable apartments in this city. Rents and food prices continue to rise even when our salaries continue to remain the same, or as we age and start to have new expenses. I have lived many years with a constant cycle of my rent rising and then trying to catch up to pay that increase year over year. Unfortunately, I was no longer able to keep with this race.

I lived in a rent-stabilized apartment with my kids, rent was about \$2,000 a month, which was more than half of my salary. In the last few years I began having health problems and I had to prioritize paying for my medicine. My salary was not enough for this additional expense since I still had to pay for food, transportation, electricity, and more, but of course, rent has always been my biggest expense and I could not keep up.

The back rent started piling up but I had to prioritize my health so I could keep working and hopefully make up the money and stay in my apartment. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to make up the money even while working full-time. I looked for rental assistance opportunities but that help never came and just 2 months ago I had to leave my home of 25 years, the place where I raised my children.

I fought until the end to save my apartment but it couldn't be done. My daughter has given me a temporary space in her home so I can avoid going into a shelter or becoming homeless.



Thousands of low-income people like me in NY are living a similar reality. Finding an affordable apartment is very difficult, and we need programs that can help the over 160,000 people who are homeless get permanent housing while also helping people stay in the homes they already have. That is why we need programs like the Housing Access Voucher Program, HAVP. This program could have helped me stay in my home, it's too late for me now, but I hope it can help others and that I can also have the chance to make a new home in the near future. Thank you.