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CITY OF NEW YORK
RENT GUIDELINES BOARD

-----x

**VIRTUAL ZOOM
PUBLIC MEETING
OF
THE DIRECTORS**

-----x

June 11, 2020
6:00 p.m.

B e f o r e :

DAVID REISS,
THE CHAIR

1

2 A P P E A R A N C E S:

3 Board of Directors:

4 David Reiss, The Chair

5 Cecilia Joza

6 Alex Schwartz

7 Christian Gonzalez-Rivera

8 Christina DeRose

9 Patti Stone

10 Scott Walsh

11 Leah Goodridge

12

13

14 **S T A F F:**

15 Andrew McLaughlin

16 Executive Director

17 Brian Hoberman

18 Research Director

19 Danielle Burger

20 Deputy Research Director

21 Charmaine Superville

22 Office Manager

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Welcome to this public hearing of the New York City Rent Guidelines Board.

6

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10

11

This is the second of two public hearings to consider comments concerning proposed rent adjustments for leases for apartments, lofts, hotels and other housing units subject to the Rent Stabilization Law of 1969 and the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974.

12

13

14

These adjustments will affect leases commencing between October 1st, 2020 through September 30th, 2021.

15

16

I will now take roll call. Please respond if present.

17

Christina DeRose.

18

MS. DE ROSE: Present.

19

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila Garcia.

20

MS. GARCIA: Present.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: Christian

22

Gonzalez-Rivera.

23

(No response.)

24

CHAIRMAN REISS: Leah Goodridge.

25

(No response.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN REISS: Cecilia Joza.

3

MS. JOZA: Present.

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: Alex Schwartz.

5

MR. SCHWARTZ: Present.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Patti Stone.

7

MS. STONE: Present.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Scott Walsh.

9

MR. WALSH: Present.

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: David Reiss,

11 present.

12

Let the record show we have a

13

quorum.

14

The next meeting of this board is

15

the final vote, which will take place on June 17th,

16

starting at 7:00 p.m. It will be held online

17

through Zoom.

18

The details for viewing the vote

19

on YouTube can be found in the meeting schedule on

20

our website, nyc.gov/rgb or by calling 212-669-7480

21

between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

22

Please note that we are still

23

taking comments on the proposed guidelines outside

24

of our public hearings. This testimony must be

25

submitted no later than tomorrow, June 12th.

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25

You can find information on submitting testimony on our website, nyc.gov/rgb or you can leave audio testimony by calling 929-256-5472.

I'd like to thank you all for attending this public hearing. The board is looking forward to hearing from many of you regarding the proposed rent adjustment guidelines.

Before we proceed with testimony, I would like to go over the rules and procedures for those who are testifying before the board.

We will begin with speakers who registered in advance. We will alternate between tenants and owners and public officials, with a speaking limit of two minutes per person.

If there is time at the end of the hearing, we will then hear from unregistered speakers on a first come first serve basis. We will explain how to do that after all registered speakers have spoken.

We will periodically display a list of upcoming speakers and will announce them verbally for those joining us by telephone. When it is your turn to speak, a staff member will

1

2 promote you from an attendee to a panelist and you
3 will have the ability to speak and display your
4 video if you so choose.

5

6 If you are attending the Zoom
7 hearing with a name or phone number that differs
8 from the name or phone number you registered with,
9 we will not be able to identify you and you may
lose your place in the queue.

10

11 If you are not an attendee at the
12 hearing at the time your name is called, you will
also lose your place in the queue.

13

14 That being said, we will make
15 efforts to give you an opportunity to speak if for
some reason you do lose your place in the queue.

16

17 A two-minute timer will begin and
18 will be displayed periodically during your
19 testimony. At the conclusion of your testimony,
20 you will become an attendee again without speaking
privileges as we move on to our next speaker.

21

22 There is a Spanish interpreter
23 here today. To listen to English testimony in
24 Spanish, please use the interpretation button to
25 choose the Spanish channel. If you would like to
listen in English, you can use the English channel

1

2 to hear Spanish speakers interpreted into English.

3

4 If you do not choose an
5 interpretation channel, you will hear all testimony
6 in the native language of the speaker.

6

7 If you are using a Zoom app on a
8 SmartPhone, you may find the interpretation button
9 by pressing the more button. If you would like to
10 listen to the hearing with simultaneous
11 interpretations in Spanish and do not have access
12 to the Zoom app, mobile device or a computer, you
13 may do so by calling 646-558-8656, then entering
14 meeting ID 88538410139 and then press hash tag and
15 hash tag again.

15

16 If you are listening to the
17 Spanish translation by telephone and plan to
18 testify during the hearings, you have to switch
19 over to the main webinar to testify.

19

20 Interpreters in the main hearing
21 will translate your testimony for the board.
22 Before it is your turn to speak, call 646-558-8656
23 and enter meeting ID 82699250495 and then press
24 hash tag and hash tag again.

24

25 We expect many speakers and the
board wants to hear from as many speakers as

1

2 possible in the limited time we have for this
3 hearing. We understand that it may be difficult to
4 say everything you want us to hear in just two
5 minutes but please understand it's our
6 responsibility to make sure that everyone has taken
7 the time to come here and testify, will have a fair
8 opportunity to be heard.

9

We thank you for your cooperation.

10

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Before we move
11 on, we have to have that translated, that last bit
12 for anyone who's on the main webinar to how to get
13 to the Spanish interpretation. So --

14

CHAIRMAN REISS: Great. So I just
15 want to acknowledge that Leah Goodridge and
16 Christian Gonzalez-Rivera have joined us. So we
17 have a full -- a full complement for the quorum.

18

MS. GOODRIDGE: Thank you.

19

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Great.

20

So I'm going to put that back up
21 on the screen. And, I guess, Liz, if you could
22 read that out in Spanish for folks.

23

THE INTERPRETER: Sure.

24

Should I wait? I have it.

25

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: You have it. But

1

2 it says start and then I'll put it up.

3 THE INTERPRETER: Okay.

4 (Translating into Spanish.)

5 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: And, David, just
6 one other thing. I -- we did extend for those who
7 are this hearing anyway, you can certainly submit,
8 the last day to submit was the 11th but we switched
9 that over to the 12th so folks who are here today
10 who would like to submit their testimony certainly
11 can do so by going to our website and the links
12 will be there to submit still. So I wanted to give
13 everyone that opportunity.

14 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. Are we
15 ready to turn over to our speakers?

16 MS. BURGER: Yes. Can I make one
17 announcement.

18 CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

19 MS. BURGER: I see a lot of people
20 in the attendees with their hands raised. If you
21 could please lower your hands. It's not going to
22 help unless you're one of the next speakers. We
23 are going to show the next speakers and we're going
24 to say it verbally and if you could raise your hand
25 if you are one of these speakers.

1

2

If you're on a telephone, you can
raise your hand by doing star 9.

4

Our next speakers are going to be:

5

Judith Morrishow;

6

Followed by Christopher Athineos;

7

George Sotiroff;

8

Joseph Condon; and,

9

Marilyn Mullins.

10

If those five people could please

11

raise their hands. That will help us find you and

12

if everyone else can lower their hands, we would

13

appreciate it.

14

Thank you very much.

15

MALE VOICE: Hello.

16

MS. MORRISHOW: Hello.

17

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, your name

18

is?

19

MS. MORRISHOW: Judith Morrishow.

20

CHAIRMAN REISS: Ms. Morrishow,

21

please you can commence your testimony.

22

Thank you.

23

MS. MORRISHOW: Okay. Good

24

evening, everyone.

25

My name is Judith Morrishow. I

1

2 live at 1310 Sheridan Avenue for 26 years. I am a
3 retired senior and a CASA member.

4

Millions of people are unemployed
5 due to the Corona Viris. Also, we lost family
6 members and friends. We are still mourning,
7 especially the seniors from the senior center,
8 whose life ended suddenly. I am so overwhelmed with
9 my June rent statement from our landlord.

10

I would like to share it with
11 everyone. Due to the Coronavirus, mail delivery
12 may be delayed and your ability to purchase money
13 orders or make payments may be impacted. You can
14 make payments online with the Click Pay using the
15 bank or credit card to ensure payments are received
16 on time to make sure payments are received on time.

17

I was very disappointed at the
18 time when we are in a crisis, landlords are
19 thinking of themselves only. Why not come up with a
20 payment plan for the tenants who don't have the
21 full amount of rent. We live in a low income
22 neighborhood. Some of your tenants don't have
23 credit cards or bank accounts.

24

The renter will be asking for a
25 rent rollback. A rent rollback would help all

1

2 tenants. We are asking again, a rent rollback, a
3 rent rollback.

4

Thank you very much for giving me
5 the opportunity to speak.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Ms.
7 Morrishow.

8

Next we have Christopher Athineos.

9

MR. ATHINEOS: Hi.

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

11

MR. ATHINEOS: Give me one
12 second. I'm sorry.

13

The board ignoring the data is
14 going to have a detrimental effect on housing for
15 renters. The PIOC came in at 3.7 percent, the core
16 PIOC came in higher at 5.1 percent.

17

My insurance costs have gone
18 through the roof. Water and sewer has risen
19 particularly during this COVID crisis where
20 everyone is staying home.

21

I received alerts from the DEP
22 that water usage has risen over 50 percent over a
23 period of three days.

24

Although I don't agree too often
25 with Assemblywoman Rosenthal, she said yesterday

1

2 that the board is working with stale data. It
3 works both ways. The board cannot solely look at
4 the affects of COVID when coming up with a proposed
5 zero percent guideline and ignore the fact that our
6 real estate taxes are based on income from two
7 years ago, which we need to be compensated for.

8 There's no doubt that COVID has
9 affected all of us; physically, psychologically and
10 financially. I heard Assemblyman Epstein yesterday
11 say everyone has to tighten their belts. However,
12 I'm expected to pay my property taxes, abate lead
13 paint, fix leaking roofs, replace the cracked
14 sidewalk and sanitize the building from COVID.

15 No elected officials or City
16 agencies are waiving any of our responsibilities.
17 I take pride in providing good service to my
18 tenants but that is increasingly difficult, if not
19 impossible, with a zero percent proposal.

20 I understand that unemployment is
21 at an unprecedented level of 14 percent citywide,
22 but that leaves the other 86 percent working or
23 receiving retirement income to pay a modest
24 increase.

25 The City should offer relief to

1

2 the 14 percent that are unemployed. It's the right
3 thing to do. Everyone agrees that the conditions
4 in NYCHA buildings are the result of massive budget
5 cuts over the years. In fact, the solution that
6 everyone agrees on is to increase funding on a
7 massive scale so that they can install new boilers,
8 new roofs and infrastructure to turn the buildings
9 around.

10

Like the COVID curve, building
11 conditions can deteriorate at lightening speed.
12 But it takes two or three times as long to build
13 them back up. But why would this board follow such
14 a recipe for disaster?

15

A zero percent increase is simply
16 unfathomable when I try to maintain my brownstone,
17 which was built in 1850.

18

I ask the board to follow the
19 data and consider a guideline consistent with the
20 rent -- with the commensurate rent adjustments.

21

Thank you.

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Mr.

23

Athineos.

24

Our next speaker is George

25

Sotiroff.

1

2

Mr. Sotiroff will be followed by

3

Joseph Condon;

4

Marilyn Mullins;

5

Joyce Holland; and,

6

Bianca Jones.

7

Mr. Sotiroff, can you hear us?

8

(No response.)

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah. It looks

10

like he's muted.

11

Mr. Sotiroff, you're going to have

12

to unmute yourself so we can hear you.

13

MR. SOTIROFF: All right.

14

Here I am. Can you hear me?

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, I can.

16

Thank you.

17

MR. SOTIROFF: Okay. My name is

18

George Sotiroff, of 901 Walton Avenue in the Bronx.

19

I'm in one of 83 buildings owned by Steve

20

Finkelstein, who is the king of the MCI.

21

Ladies and gentlemen of the Rent

22

Guidelines Board, my -- I had a dream. Like most

23

dreams it was incongruous. There were seven

24

predatory landlords and there were seven small

25

landlords. The seven predatory landlords devoured

1

2 the seven small landlords and they were still
3 predatory.

4 Then the minister of housing
5 approached Queen Patty Antoinette and said, your
6 majesty, the tenants are rent burdened. And the
7 Queen answered, let them get second and third jobs.
8 But your majesty protested the minister, tenants
9 were working 25 hours a day, eight days a week but
10 now not only have major manufacturing jobs been
11 shipped overseas but even the remaining muck jobs
12 have evaporated.

13 The predatory landlords are
14 depriving Americans of their shelter. And Queen
15 Patty reported, the tenants have no shelter, let
16 them move into Trump Towers. And then the palace
17 was overrun by a mob carrying pitchforks, at which
18 point I woke up. I hate violence.

19 Ladies and gentlemen of the Rent
20 Guidelines Board, I'm sharing this dream with you
21 in the hopes that somebody on the board, anybody
22 can interpret and so help society mitigate this
23 disaster we are now experiencing.

24 Remember, those who refuse to
25 learn from history are Donald Trump and the public

1

2 welfare must always trump destructive profiteering.

3

4 a rent rollback.

5

6 Sotiroff.

7

MR. SOTIROFF: Thank you.

8

9 is Joseph Condon;

10

To be followed by Marilyn Mullins.

11

12 evening, board members.

13

14 My name is Joseph Condon. I'm here
15 on behalf of CHIP, a housing advocacy organization
16 for owners of rent stabilized properties.

17

18 I'm not here to go over the
19 numbers or data, which you've heard already and
20 which undeniably demonstrate that property owners
21 need a rent increase to keep up with increases in
22 operating costs.

23

24 But listening to the testimony and
25 discussion from yesterday and some earlier
meetings, I do want to point out that it appears
that there is a false choice being presented to the
members of this board. Where you're being asked to

1

2 choose between a reasonable rent increase for small
3 property owners against mass evictions and
4 homelessness for tenants.

5

Now I'd like to point out two
6 pieces of legislation that recently passed in the
7 State.

8

First, the Emergency Voucher
9 Program legislation that was passed and delivered
10 to the Governor last week, which provides vouchers
11 to households who experience reduced income and
12 could not pay rent during the COVID period. This
13 is for households at 80 percent of AMI or lower and
14 who pay more than one-third of their income in
15 rent. So it is focused on the very people this
16 board is being told they're at risk of homelessness
17 and eviction.

18

The second piece of legislation
19 was also passed last week and prohibits the
20 eviction of any occupants for non-payment of rent
21 that occurred during the COVID-19 period. This is
22 a blanket prohibition from being evicted for
23 non-payment of rent that became due during the
24 COVID-19 emergency.

25

Even when the emergency ends, a

1

2 tenant cannot be evicted for these arrears. These
3 two pieces of legislation address many of this
4 board's reasons for potentially freezing rents,
5 which I hope allow this board to now address the
6 property owners' needs for a rent increase rather
7 than be persuaded by the perceived need to prevent
8 COVID related evictions.

9 I also wanted to mention that the
10 long programs and tax benefits you heard about
11 yesterday, all come with significant strings
12 attached. Way too many for a small owner to -- to
13 follow. So a zero percent increase sends a clear
14 signal to small property owners that it's time to
15 cash out.

16 So while members on this board
17 love to rally against large corporate owners, a
18 rent freeze is actually pushing the industry into
19 their hands.

20 Thank you for the time.

21 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Mr.
22 Condon.

23 Our next speaker is:

24 Marilyn Mullins;

25 To be followed by Joyce Holland;

1

2 and,

3

Bianca Jones.

4

MS. MULLINS: Good evening.

5

Can you hear me now?

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, I can.

7

Is this Marilyn Mullins?

8

MS. MULLINS: Yes, it is.

9

And thank you for having me.

10

My name is Marilyn Mullins and I'm

11

a rent stabilized tenant in the Highbridge section

12

of the Bronx.

13

Being a senior citizen living on a

14

fixed income with my daughter and grandson, I can't

15

afford a rent increase. This will put an even

16

higher burden on me. I would have to choose

17

between paying for my medicine or paying bills or

18

buying groceries or even moving in with a family

19

member, even worse, being displaced into a shelter

20

with my daughter and grandson. And we all know the

21

shelters are overcrowded and unhealthy.

22

New York City has over 95,000

23

homeless people. Even with all the new high rises

24

going up in the City, the rent is so high. My

25

daughter can't afford a one-bedroom apartment. She

1

2 has to live at home with me.

3

4 Right now a rent hike will put an
5 even higher burden on all of the senior citizens
6 and low income families in rent stabilized
7 apartments who are paying 30 percent of their
8 income.

8

9

10

11

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13

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25

8 I want to thank you for listening
9 to me.

10 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Ms.
11 Mullins.

12 Our next speaker is:
13 Joyce Holland;
14 To be followed by Bianca Jones;
15 Kim Robinson;
16 Maria Cordones; and,
17 Ephraim Fruchthandler.

18 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: David, I don't
19 see Joyce Holland.

20 So I promoted our next speaker
21 after that.

22 CHAIRMAN REISS: Is that Ms.
23 Jones?

24 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN REISS: Ms. Jones, can

1

2 you hear us or are we -- I can't hear --

3 (Zoom bombing.)

4 CHAIRMAN REISS: Excuse me, Ms.
5 Jones. We don't accept this civic discourse. This
6 is a reprehensible thing to do during a public
7 hearing. This is not how we do things in this
8 country.

9 MS. BURGER: She's been removed.

10 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

11 Okay. I'm just a little taken
12 aback that someone would do that during a public
13 hearing.

14 So can we move on to our next
15 speaker?

16 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yes, our next
17 speaker is Kim Robinson.

18 She's been promoted.

19 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

20 Kim Robinson, can you hear us?

21 MS. ROBINSON: I can. I'm sorry.

22 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, if you
23 need a moment.

24 MS. ROBINSON: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN REISS: I need a moment

1

2 too.

3

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yes.

4

MS. ROBINSON: Yeah.

5

Okay. Let's get this show on the

6

road.

7

My name is Kim Robinson. I'm the

8

daughter of immigrants who came to Brooklyn from

9

the Caribbean in 1971.

10

While holding full-time jobs and

11

raising three children, my parents rehabilitated

12

abandoned buildings and they're in predominately

13

African American and Caribbean immigrant community

14

of East Flatbush. They didn't do this with

15

construction crews or private contracting firms.

16

They used their own sweat equity to renovate each

17

apartment.

18

Licensed plumbers and electricians

19

and vendors they used came from the community. And

20

who, by their shared generosity agreed to work on

21

credit. Many of these small businesses we still

22

hold relationships with today.

23

With the belief that they should

24

pay it forward, my parents starting renting

25

apartments at below market rents, against the

1

2 advice of their mortgage lenders. For 40 plus
3 years, my family has worked tirelessly. Other
4 second-generation owners like myself continue to
5 offer well-maintained apartments at below market
6 rents, a service the City is incapable of
7 providing. Truly affordable housing, our rents are
8 less than half what so-called affordable housing
9 developers are charging.

10 The same developers in the City in
11 the middle of an unprecedented, economic crisis
12 recently granted 40-year tax abatements. The
13 sweeping housing laws passed in 2019, the
14 inadequate RGB increases for the past five years
15 and the yearly ten percent increase of municipal
16 fees have stifled our ability to effectively
17 operate in the community.

18 We are unable to renovate vacant
19 apartments, thereby removing more affordable units
20 from the housing stock. If this situation
21 continues, our family business will have to give
22 serious consideration to selling.

23 As we have seen during this
24 pandemic, small businesses are the heart of this
25 City and it is essential to its survival. We must

1

2 work together. One sector cannot and should not
3 bear the brunt alone.

4

What am I asking for? Equity.

5

6 Our costs are rising so we need adequate increases
7 in order to survive. Help us to properly serve our
8 community. Allow us to continue to operate by
9 being able to provide quality service to our
10 renters, employ our staff, utilize our neighborhood
11 small businesses and pay our City expenses.

12

Please realize the small increase

13

14 you approve allows for the greater good of the
15 community at large.

16

Thank you all for your time.

17

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Ms.

18

Robinson.

19

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: David.

20

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

21

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I'm sorry.

22

Joyce Holland is now here.

23

CHAIRMAN REISS: You know, before

24

Ms. Holland speaks, I just kind of collected my

25

26 thoughts and I just want to say to those who are

27

28 listening and board members, what has really struck

29

30 me this year, in particular, with the difficulties

1

2 of communicating virtually is just -- these issues
3 are of great importance to all of the tenants who
4 testify and as well as to the owners who testify.

5 And I've been struck just by how
6 thoughtful and intelligent the debate, you know,
7 people disagree strongly but it's been thoughtful,
8 fact based, respectful and kind of seeing a -- a
9 hateful behavior like that in the context of our
10 deliberations just reminds me of -- of the real
11 civic engagement that the participants in this
12 process have engaged with and by way of contrast it
13 shows really a great -- a great kind of civic
14 behavior on our part.

15 So I, again, apologize to everyone
16 that we were subject to that.

17 But, yes, Andrew, we can move on
18 to the next person.

19 MS. GARCIA: Sorry. Can I just
20 say -- that wasn't Bianca. She's here on behalf of
21 a councilmember, so her account was hacked.

22 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

23 MS. GARCIA: And so that happened
24 and so we're trying to figure out how to get her to
25 call back in from a house line and that way she can

1

2 actually give her testimony.

3 CHAIRMAN REISS: Great, Sheila.

4 MS. GARCIA: We will figure it

5 out on our end.

6 CHAIRMAN REISS: Great.

7 Thank you.

8 I'm sorry. So our next speaker

9 is -- is Ms. Joyce Holland; is that correct?

10 MS. HOLLAND: Yes, sir. Can you

11 hear me?

12 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

13 Sorry for all of the commotion.

14 But the floor is yours.

15 MS. HOLLAND: Yeah, well, thank

16 you for allowing me to testify.

17 Yesterday I testified and I was

18 greatly taken back by some of the comments.

19 My family has struggled in this

20 City to own property for -- going back to 1929 --

21 1924. And the comments -- the comments I'm

22 hearing, they're just stunning.

23 You work hard. You do all the

24 right things. You pay your taxes. You go to

25 school and then you get slapped in the face by

1

2 folks telling you that you do not deserve what you
3 work for. And that's what I'm hearing over and
4 over again in this testimony.

5

I can't tell you how much I was
6 shaken by what I heard yesterday. It's simply not
7 right and as I said yesterday, it's simply not
8 fair.

9

I am a minority in this City. I'm
10 a minority in this nation and, again, you work
11 hard, you do the right thing, you get rewarded.
12 And that's not what's happening here.

13

And that's all I have to say for
14 today.

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
16 your testimony, Ms. Holland.

17

I believe that our next speaker is
18 Maria Cordones; is that correct?

19

MS. BURGER: Can I just make a
20 quick announcement.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

22

MS. BURGER: If we have any public
23 officials in attendance, if they could change
24 their -- I sorry, raise their hands.

25

I think we have one that did not

1

2 register. I'm just going to double check. But if
3 there's any others, if you could please raise your
4 hand and we will get to you.

5

Thank you.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: All right.

7

And are we going to go to Maria

8

Cordones now?

9

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I do not see her

10

in attendance.

11

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

12

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: And certainly we

13

will come back to her if she comes on. But I do

14

not -- she is also a -- requested to speak in

15

Spanish so maybe our interpreter can ask if she's

16

in attendance.

17

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking in

18

Spanish.

19

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Oh, I see her

20

actually.

21

I'm going to allow her to speak.

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: Ms. Cordones, can

23

you hear us?

24

(No response.)

25

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: No, I'm sorry.

1

2 That was not.

3 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

4 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I read that.

5 MALE VOICE: (Zoom inaudible.)

6 Muted.

7 CHAIRMAN REISS: I'm sorry. Who's
8 this?9 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah. No, that
10 was actually -- I looked at the last three digits.
11 I was incorrect.

12 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

13 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: So our next
14 speaker would be Efraim Fruchthandler.

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Fruchthandler.

16 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah. Who was
17 on the telephone but he was also -- I mean, here he
18 is.19 MR. FRUCHTHANDLER: Yes. I
20 figured out how to do that. I'm on the phone
21 because that's how I registered.22 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay. Great.
23 Do you want to come on with a
24 video or are you okay on the phone?

25 MR. FRUCHTHANDLER: I'm okay on

1

2 the phone.

3

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay. Great.

4

Go ahead.

5

MR. FRUCHTHANDLER: Okay. So I

6

wanted to talk a little bit about rent

7

stabilization. It really started with rent control

8

which really didn't work because it was too

9

restrictive. And I think it was in 1974 the Rent

10

Stabilization came about to be with the Rent

11

Guidelines Board in place so that the increases

12

that would happen all the time, would be directly

13

related to costs. And therefore would dampen

14

any -- any increase in rents that would happen to

15

tenants.

16

Rent stabilization does not have

17

any income thresholds to -- to qualify for

18

residency. Stabilized tenants can afford much more

19

than they're paying. We're a very charitable

20

country. They make programs that our taxes pay for

21

that -- that control the need for costs and Section

22

8 for housing and other seed programs, rental

23

assistance, food stamps, welfare, WIC for children.

24

The system really protects

25

long-term tenants through the rent stabilization

1

2 system but that's the long-term tenants. It was
3 relatively lawless and as we know vacancy rent
4 increases over time. Even rent increases as they
5 are approved by the Rent Guidelines Board are in
6 favor of long-term tenants because their rents are
7 lower and shorter-term rentals are affected more
8 because their rents are higher.

9 So from an owners' standpoint,
10 taxes have risen by more than 50 percent over the
11 last ten years. Water and sewer have become a
12 larger expense than heating.

13 And zero or a small percentage
14 increase will result only in the City taking over
15 buildings. I don't think anyone wants to live in
16 publicly controlled housing. We've seen where
17 that's going.

18 If the Rent Guidelines Board will
19 establish to ensure the renter (Zoom inaudible)
20 establish be competent expenses. We need increases
21 to maintain the buildings and maintain the -- the
22 employeeship of all the employees that they --

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Mr. Fruchthandler
24 -- Mr. Fruchthandler, your time is up.

25 MR. FRUCHTHANDLER: I'm just

1

2 winding down, if I may.

3

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, go ahead.

4

5 June the State government took away the ability of
6 increases to occur in any other fashion except the
7 Rent Guidelines Board. This is now in your hands.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Mr.

9

Fruchthandler.

10

MR. FRUCHTHANDLER: Do what you're

11

mandated.

12

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

13

MS. BURGER: Can I make just a

14

quick announcement.

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

16

MS. BURGER: A lot of hands are

17

raised. I need you to put your hand down unless

18

you're a public official or one of the next few

19

speakers. The next few speakers would be:

20

Robert Gumbs;

21

Kate Yale;

22

Ramona Monegro;

23

Andrew Latsko; and,

24

Yoselyn Gomez.

25

Please put down your hands.

1

2 Otherwise, we'll put down your hands for you. It's
3 making it hard for us to find people. And the
4 quicker that we can do this the more people that we
5 can hear from.

6

Thank you.

7

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

8

Spanish.

9

MS. GARCIA: David. David, can I

10 just make a quick announcement?

11

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

12

Spanish.

13

MS. GARCIA: We can hear you on

14 the main line whoever is doing interpreting right
15 now.

16

I just wanted to say that I --

17

I -- we spoke to Judith, I mean, Bianca and Bianca

18

is actually an African American senior and is right

19

now devastated because she didn't understand what

20

was going on. And she was on the phone and so we

21

explained it to her. She will call in from her

22

phone line and try to give her testimony but she

23

was clearly, as we were, upset and shaken up and

24

didn't understand the context and thought somebody

25

was actually saying that to her.

1

2

3

4

It is a little bit emotional right now. So we'll have her call in and let folks know when she gets here.

5

6

7

8

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila, that's great. And if Bianca Jones is still listening, I'm sorry that had to happen. So we definitely will be able to hear from you when you're ready to share with us.

10

11

12

13

I think before we go to anyone else, I think State Senator Zellnor Myrie is present. So I'd like to acknowledge him and cede the floor to him.

14

15

16

SENATOR MYRIE: Am I clear to go?

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR MYRIE: Great.

17

18

19

Thank you. Thank you very much. And thank you to the board for this opportunity.

20

21

22

23

24

25

I'm here today to call for a rent rollback. While previously we have asked for a rent freeze, the COVID-19 pandemic is having an unprecedented impact on renters in our City and in my district specifically. And this body must be charged with taking a stand to protect the rent

1

2 regulated tenants in the City and that means not
3 only a rent freeze but a rent rollback for one and
4 two-year leases.

5 Our office has received hundreds,
6 if not thousands, of calls since the pandemic
7 started, seeking monies to pay rent. In a global
8 pandemic, the number one issue that my constituents
9 were worried about was not food, not medication but
10 rent.

11 And in addition to that, our
12 office handles thousands of e-mails and phone calls
13 to help with unemployment benefits for the purposes
14 of paying rent because that's what their main
15 concern was. They were not as worried about the
16 Corona Virus as they were about losing their place
17 to live. And this is not surprising because the
18 majority of tenants in my district are rent
19 burdened.

20 My district is nearly 49,000 rent
21 regulated units. I live in one of those units.
22 And more than any other State Senate District in
23 Kings County, 57 percent of tenants in my district
24 pay more than a third of their income on rent and
25 33 percent of tenants pay more than half their

1

2 income in rent.

3

4 Many of these renters are the very
5 same health care workers, MTA bus drivers and train
6 conductors, grocery store workers and other
7 essential workers for whom we applaud every night
8 at 7:00 p.m.

8

9

A rent rollback would be justice
for them.

10

11 Many landlords are collecting rent
12 money while neglecting to maintain their buildings.
13 Of the 254 buildings from Brooklyn on the City's
14 worse landlord list, over 65 are in my district.
15 And these landlords aren't using the money to
16 operate the buildings properly.

16

17

18

19

20

So let me just conclude by saying
that you guys have a duty to ensure that those who
have been protecting our City remain protected in
their homes and we're calling for a rent rollback
and not just a rent freeze.

21

Thank you for your time.

22

23

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you,
Senator.

24

25

I think the next speakers now are:

Robert Gumbs;

1

2

Kate Yale;

3

Ramona Monegro;

4

Andrew Lasko; and,

5

Yoselyn Gomez.

6

MR. GUMBS: Good evening.

7

CHAIRMAN REISS: Good evening.

8

MR. GUMBS: My name is Robert

9

Gumbs. I live at 11 (Zoom inaudible) Avenue.

10

I am also partially disabled, a

11

Navy veteran.

12

And the observation that I would

13

like to make is simply this. We're living in a time

14

when all of our sins are catching up to us. We

15

have this virus, something that hasn't been seen in

16

this country since 1918. People are ill. People

17

are dying. People lost their jobs.

18

We have an administration in

19

Washington that does not give a damn about working

20

class people. And I understand that -- that the

21

landlords say that they want money because they

22

don't feel they have enough money.

23

I haven't met a landlord yet that

24

didn't think that the rent that these people pay

25

shouldn't be higher. But that's business. But as

1

2 a country we have to decide, and as a State, we
3 have to decide, do we value human beings or do we
4 just value capital.

5

And I think that the one silver
6 lining about this virus is that it's forcing people
7 to make that choice.

8

You know, I also understand that
9 you have some people they want to, you know, talk
10 about well, we're not nigger property owners. This
11 is a little family institution, blah, blah, blah.
12 Yeah. Okay. Fine.

13

That lady sitting across from me
14 is an older woman, okay, taking care of two
15 grandchildren. And what does she have to do with
16 that? See this is a forced argument anyway because
17 either you are going to help, you're going to help
18 each other.

19

All right.

20

Or, you know, we are going to
21 conduct ourselves like the callous brutes that some
22 people would rather see us act like.

23

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

24

MR. GUMBS: People are not, you
25 know, people are not working. They're not able to

1

2 pay rent increases and there should be either a
3 freeze or a rollback.

4

5 Gumbs.

6

Your time is up.

7

MR. GUMBS: You're welcome.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

9

We'll move on to our next speaker:

10

Kate Yale;

11

To be followed by Ramona Monegro;

12

Andrew Latsko;

13

Yoselyn Gomez; and,

14

Joseph Veltri.

15

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Kate, you're

16

good to speak.

17

(Zoom bombing)

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Can we mute this

19

again? Can we mute this. It seems like we're

20

getting Zoom bombed.

21

(Off the record.)

22

MR. HOBERMAN: Sorry. I muted

23

everyone.

24

CHAIRMAN REISS: I think -- it

25

seems like people who are registered are somehow

1

2 being --

3

MS. BURGER: What we're going to have to do is not announce any names in advance.

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. I think that makes sense -- I think that makes sense unless I -- I hear something else from a board member, otherwise I think that's the responsible thing to do because.

10

MS. GARCIA: I just don't know how we call on the Spanish speakers if we don't do that. They won't know what's going on because they can't see the screen and anyone calling in won't be able to know they're speaking.

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: Anyone calling in.

17

Danielle, do you have any thoughts about that?

19

MS. BURGER: Well, I think the only issue is for the people who are listening over on the other hearing on the telephone in Spanish.

22

We are going to say their name in this one.

24

Sheila, you're muted.

25

We are going to say their name in

1

2 this one and we do have their phone numbers. I
3 don't know how else to do it. We can just use first
4 name and last initial. We can do it that way.

5 CHAIRMAN REISS: Or should we --
6 should every time a name be announced -- I'm just
7 thinking out loud, Sheila. Every time a name is
8 announced, could we just have the interpreter also
9 make the announcement asking them to be on deck; is
10 that -- does that make sense?

11 MS. GARCIA: Sure. I think we
12 should try that.

13 CHAIRMAN REISS: Danielle, does
14 that make sense?

15 MS. BURGER: Yeah, if they're
16 listening on the other hearing and they hear their
17 name, we know that they're on the telephone and
18 we're not going to take them unless they have the
19 correct phone number.

20 So for the people calling in that
21 we know are supposed to be on the telephone, it's
22 not as much of a big deal. And for the people who
23 are doing it on video, I'm sorry but we're not
24 going to say your name until the last minute so
25 that nobody has a chance to use your name.

1

2

We apologize for what's happening.

3

I'm not sure what to do.

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila, let's

5

give it a try and, of course, we'll be able to go

6

back and somehow we -- we mix it up. But let's

7

just go one by one and if necessary -- maybe we

8

should -- maybe -- Sheila, does it make sense,

9

maybe we should say something in Spanish now so

10

that people understand we've changed our procedure

11

and they should listen for their name and if they

12

miss being called, we'll circle back to them. Does

13

that makes sense?

14

So -- does someone need to say

15

that on this channel or has it already been

16

translated.

17

MS. GARCIA: I think we are going

18

to have to say it on both channels because if

19

there's someone who speaks Spanish in the waiting

20

room or as an attendee, they would need to hear it

21

in Spanish on there too.

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. So,

23

Danielle, can you -- or can you state the new

24

procedure and then we'll translate it on both

25

channels.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

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20

21

22

23

24

25

MS. BURGER: Okay. Just -- just so you know, the people who are listening -- I'm sorry. I was looking at my phone for a second.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah.

MS. BURGER: I missed what you said. But the people are listening in Spanish on the phone on the other channel are hearing what's happening on the Spanish channel through the video.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Right.

MS. BURGER: So I'm not sure that we have to say everything twice but we can.

MS. GARCIA: That's only if they have the app. If someone's calling in, they don't have that access. So we have to --

MS. BURGER: Only if they're calling in on this hearing -- if they're calling into the other one. But, yes, we can say it twice.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah, there's no harm. There's certainly no harm.

So -- so we're going to ask that people listen for their names. If they hear their names, they raise their hands in the appropriate way technologically and they will be called upon.

If we miss you because you -- you

1

2 didn't react quickly enough, we'll certainly circle
3 back and make sure you -- you get an opportunity as
4 soon as we identify that oversight.

5

And if that could be translated on
6 this channel, I think we've covered our bases.

7

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking
8 Spanish.

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. Any board
10 members have any other comments before we
11 transition to our next speaker?

12

(No response.)

13

MS. BURGER: I'm actually thinking
14 maybe we should just use our first name and a last
15 initial. I just removed from someone who was
16 trying to impersonate another speaker, whose name
17 had already been announced.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

19

MS. BURGER: So we may get some
20 more of this. I don't know because we did already
21 announce some speakers.

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

23

Understood. So we'll just be -- as soon as we
24 identify an unregistered speaker speaking, we will
25 mute them and then go to our next registered

1

2 speaker.

3

MS. BURGER: And I think for right now, for the next few speakers, we're just going to allow audio, no video.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

7

MS. BURGER: Okay. Okay. That makes sense to me.

9

MS. BURGER: Simply we cannot allow you to have your video on.

11

CHAIRMAN REISS: Danielle, once -- once it's determined that it is the registered speaker, could we turn it on then? Is that okay?

15

MS. BURGER: I don't know. Maybe when we get to the point where we're just giving first names and last initials, but right now you could pretend to --

19

CHAIRMAN REISS: Right.

20

MS. BURGER: -- be a very nice person and then your video comes on and, you know, I don't -- this is a really terrible situation.

23

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah, I agree, Danielle. Let's go with your -- with your protocol.

25

1

2

3

4

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25

MS. BURGER: Okay. So then I think we should allow Ramona Monegro to -- to speak without video.

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking Spanish.

(Zoom bombing.)

CHAIRMAN REISS: Bah, bah, bah. How about this?

MS. GOODRIDGE: How about Black Lives Matter.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

MS. BURGER: We're going to have to just go on to people whose name we have not said.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, I agree with that as a strategy. And apologies to those who are next up but we will come back to you once -- once we're solved this problem.

MS. BURGER: Okay. If -- if there's a Spanish speaker named Ramon, who's supposed to be calling on the telephone, if he can come over to this one or I'll check if they're here already.

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

1

2 Spanish.

3

4 right now.

5

6 Stephanie.

7

8 MS. GARCIA: Can you guys give us
9 a second to get on our ends, call our members so
10 that like folks who are on the phone, they would
11 have logged off our Zoom call.

12

13 MS. BURGER: No, I know. We will
14 come back to them. We'll come back to them.

15

16 MS. GARCIA: I know. I know. I'm
17 just asking for you to break for a second because
18 some people, not only mono lingual Spanish speakers
19 are also calling in and so if you keeping going
20 through the list, we're just going to keep cycling
21 through people. Just give us a second. One
22 second.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila, is it okay
25 if we move to some of the owner -- the owner
26 testifiers.

27

28 Okay. Let's move to some of the
29 owners' testimony.

30

31 MS. BURGER: I'm not sure. I'm

1

2 getting a message from Stephanie that because she's
3 using an older version of Zoom, that we have to
4 promote her to a panelist to talk.

5

6 I -- we hadn't announced her name
7 so I think it's okay.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

9

MS. BURGER: But let's just be
10 quick on the mouse.

11

MS. LANGLE: Can you hear me?

12

MS. BURGER: Yes.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes. Hello.

14

MS. LANGLE: Okay. Hi.

15

I'm a legit person.

16

(Laughter.)

17

MS. LANGLE: Thank you.

18

19 Hello, my name is Stephanie Langle
20 and I, along with my husband and my sister, own and
21 manage three small buildings in Manhattan.

22

23 My husband is the super and does
24 all the maintenance. My sister manages the
25 finances and I manage marketing and leasing.

26

27 We have rent stabilized tenants
28 that have lived in our building for more than 50
29 years. It's imperative that the RGB not allow a

1

2 rent freeze but instead grant fair and necessary
3 increases, as recommended in your own PIOC reports.

4

With the Housing Stability and
5 Tenant Protection Act of 2019, owners have been
6 severely impacted in their ability to reinvest or
7 even maintain our properties.

8

Rising real estate taxes, heating,
9 water and sewage, gas and electricity, as well as
10 the normal maintenance expenses. For example, a
11 refrigerator, a stove or a hot water heater that
12 needs replacement will be difficult to cover if
13 rents freeze.

14

In the past three months as a
15 result of COVID-19, we've lost non-stabilized
16 tenants and with only four calls from brokers
17 during this time and many New Yorkers fleeing the
18 City, there's little prospect of renting anything.
19 So these apartments sit empty and those rents are
20 the ones that subsidize the stabilized tenants.

21

Tenants have been granted an
22 eviction moratorium that was extended until August.
23 Well, what about relief for small property owners?
24 If we continue on this path over the coming months
25 and years, housing will begin to fall into serious

1

2 disrepair. Owners will eventually abandon their
3 buildings and you will be left with the worst
4 landlord, the City itself. And you will have
5 played a part in this downfall.

6

Why constantly punish the owners?

7

We are hard working people who invested our life
8 savings in our properties. We have families to
9 support and we make sacrifices to continue
10 operating our buildings. Many ask why don't more
11 tenant owners testify? Because they feel it's
12 hopeless and our pleas fall on deaf ears.

13

Please don't let that be the case
14 and help us to continue to maintain safe and
15 affordable homes for New Yorkers. The alternative
16 is scary.

17

Thank you.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
19 your testimony.

20

MS. LANGLE: Thanks.

21

MS. STONE: Danielle. Hi.

22

MS. BURGER: Yes.

23

MS. STONE: I just got an e-mail
24 from an owner that says her name was called but her
25 line wouldn't be unmuted. She's on the line now

1

2 waiting. Her name is Kathleen Elvin. Is there any
3 way you can unmute her and get her to speak.

4

MS. BURGER: I need to find her in
5 the list.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: I'm not sure
7 she's been called on yet.

8

MS. BURGER: I don't -- she --

9

MS. STONE: She said she was
10 called and she's on the line waiting.

11

CHAIRMAN REISS: Kathleen Elvin.

12

MS. STONE: I'll write back and
13 tell her she wasn't called yet. She should keep
14 listening.

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: Patti, I'm not
16 even sure -- what's her name?

17

MS. STONE: E-l-v-i-n, Kathleen
18 Elvin.

19

CHAIRMAN REISS: I don't see her
20 at all on the list. You're sure it's her.

21

MS. STONE: I just got an e-mail.
22 Yeah.

23

CHAIRMAN REISS: But you're sure
24 she's not spoofing you?

25

MS. STONE: How would I know

1

2 that? I have no idea.

3

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah. She's
4 not on the list. She did not preregister. So
5 either way.

6

MS. STONE: Okay.

7

CHAIRMAN REISS: I just want to
8 say that -- that to the extent that the person who
9 keeps Zoom bombing this, to the extent that this
10 can be investigated as -- as criminal interference
11 with our proceeding, I'm going to refer this matter
12 to the prosecutors. So if you're listening, I hope
13 you're prepared for that response to your behavior.

14

MS. GOODRIDGE: And also that
15 Black Lives Matter. So goodbye.

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: Danielle, do we
17 have a next person identified?

18

MS. BURGER: We do but I don't
19 see her. She's supposed to be on video. And
20 there's an owner after that who I don't --

21

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I -- I have the
22 owner.

23

MS. STONE: Oh, I'm sorry. They
24 said the name was Kate Yale.

25

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. We had

1

2 that name.

3

MS. STONE: Yes. Okay.

4

5 you're identifying, Andrew.

6

7 I identified the person that Danielle was talking

8

about, the other owner.

9

10 on the attendee list.

11

12 is No. 12.

13

14 list.

15

16 in on the phone and then get her to give you what

17

18 name has been said and we can't -- we can't do

19

anything now. Her name's out there.

20

21 her phone number.

22

23 on to somebody else in the interim?

24

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yes.

25

MS. GARCIA: Just so it's known,

1

2 the -- when you kick someone off Zoom, sometimes
3 the setting is that the person's number can never
4 go back on.

5 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

6 MS. GARCIA: So they were photo
7 bombed with the assumption that their number was
8 the one that was being used. They might have to
9 call from another number. But they should try the
10 official number because what I understand is
11 happening is that someone is using a Zoom account,
12 is just listening for the name. Then their going
13 on, changing their name to fit the name that's
14 going to get called next.

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. Okay.

16 MS. BURGER: That's why I'm saying
17 for this owner, she needs to call in on the phone.
18 There's no way she can state the last three digits
19 of her phone number and that's the way we're going
20 to identify her.

21 CHAIRMAN REISS: And, Danielle,
22 how is Patti going to get you that information? Is
23 she going to e-mail that to you?

24 MS. BURGER: Yes, she can e-mail
25 that to me.

1

2

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

3

4

MS. BURGER: And Patti, I will
e-mail you the phone number she needs to call in
on.

5

6

7

MS. STONE: Okay. Great. She
sent me her number.

8

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah, don't say
it out loud.

10

11

MS. STONE: No, I'm not going to.

12

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay, Andrew,
let's move on as Patti and Danielle figure that
out. Do you think that makes sense?

14

15

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay.

So we have Monique Danner.

16

17

MS. DANNER: Sorry. I'm just
trying to get my video on. Okay.

18

19

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: We just have you
as being able to speak at this point. So if you'd
just go with that, Monique.

20

21

MS. DANNER: Okay.

22

Thank you.

23

24

My name is Monique Danner and I'm
a small property owner. My family has built our
business with sweat equity and by making

25

1

2 sacrifices.

3

4 Owning property does not mean one
5 is wealthy. There are many owners who sell their
6 properties because they cannot afford to exhaust
7 their savings to subsidize their tenants. Property
8 owners are not the only -- I'm sorry. Property
9 owners are the only small businesses continually
10 being asked to subsidize their customers.

11

12 Owners need rent increases to
13 cover their increasing operating expenses. It is
14 the obligation of the City, not the small property
15 owner to subsidize and support a tenant who cannot
16 afford their rent.

17

18 As Chairman Reiss has said, since
19 HSTPA was enacted last June, rent increases enacted
20 by the RGB are the only source of income that rent
21 stabilized owners have to cover their increasing
22 operating costs.

23

24 A rent freeze would be
25 devastating, all but ensuring that owners will not
26 have necessary funds to maintain their housing in a
27 desirable condition.

28

29 They use data for the 2020 PIOC
30 report to see what happens to a building using your

1

2 numbers, what happens to the income with the rent
3 freeze while costs increase at the 3.7 percent PIOC
4 projection. It shows that the building will start
5 losing money after four years, requiring the owner
6 to take money out of their savings, out of their
7 pockets to maintain the building starting in year
8 five.

9 If you owned a regulated apartment
10 building and were required to take money out of
11 your life savings every year to maintain the
12 apartments and the value went down every year,
13 would you make this investment? If you freeze
14 rents, you will not be preserving affordable
15 housing for New Yorkers but you will be responsible
16 for transforming back to the dilapidated and
17 abandoned buildings of the 1970s and '80s.

18 Please have the strength to do the
19 right thing for New Yorkers and follow the PIOC
20 recommendation to increase rents two-and-a-half and
21 3.3 percent for one and two-year leases. Then your
22 legacy will be one of preserving the affordable
23 housing supply in New York.

24 Should you freeze rents and fail
25 to support New York's housing supply, your legacy

1

2 will be the urban blight of New York City.

3

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Ms.

4

Danner.

5

Thank you for your testimony.

6

Do we have a next speaker lined

7

up?

8

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Give me a

9

second, David?

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sure.

11

Hello.

12

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello. Is that

13

Ms. Danner?

14

(Laughter.)

15

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay. Our next

16

speaker is going to be Lydia Hatch.

17

MS. HATCH: Hello.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello, Ms.

19

Hatch?

20

MS. HATCH: Yes.

21

Hi. Can you hear me?

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: We can. Please

23

proceed with your testimony.

24

MS. HATCH: Great. I'm -- my name

25

is Lydia Hatch. I own a building in the Bronx that

1

2 I inherited from my father. So I am a second
3 generation building landlord.

4

5 I am here to testify that a zero
6 percent guideline for what would be the third time
7 during Mayor de Blasio's term, for us landlords
8 would be debilitating. Most of the landlords that
9 have testified before me that I've listened to, are
10 all on the same page.

11

12 I have a 1911 building. I
13 maintain it with pride. I actually have spoken to
14 all my tenants during the COVID crisis and have
15 offered to work with them and to give me partial
16 payments with no penalty. And I just think that
17 the possibility of having a zero percent increase
18 when there has been no attempt for any taxes, any
19 water or any of the other expenses that go into
20 maintaining this old building stock, nothing has
21 been offered to landlords.

22

23 So in a very one-sided view of
24 what owning old property, you know, old building
25 stock, old affordable housing is in New York City
and I just wanted to sort of reiterate what
everyone has said before me. I am a single
building landlord and I can't -- my taxes just went

1

2 up this year again. They're \$80,000 a year. It's
3 just untenable.

4

I appreciate your time and for
5 listening to my testimony.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you so
7 much.

8

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: So our next
9 speaker is going to be Fitzroy Christian.

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: Mr. Christian.

11

MR. CHRISTIAN: Can you hear me?

12

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, we can.

13

MR. CHRISTIAN: All right.

14

Good evening.

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: Good evening.

16

MR. CHRISTIAN: My name is Fitzroy
17 Christian. I live at 15 Featherbed Lane in the Mt.
18 Eden section of the southwest Bronx.

19

I am in a rent stabilized
20 apartment and I have been living here for 44 years.

21

On the pre-COVID-19 conditions in
22 New York City, it had been extremely difficult for
23 hundreds of thousands, if not more than a million
24 New Yorkers, in particular seniors, most of us who
25 barely exist on a fixed income from Social Security

1

2 and pension and other benefits for us to pay our
3 rents and utilities, to purchase food and clothing,
4 to come up with our co-pay shares for health care
5 and medication and to live a life with any
6 semblance of dignity or quality.

7 And today in our current state of
8 health emergency due to the Coronavirus and all the
9 economic burdens we must bear as a result of the
10 loss of our jobs or greatly reduced income and the
11 criminally inadequate response and assistance from
12 federal, State and City governments.

13 We are now facing the additional
14 threat of having our rents increased, of being
15 evicted from our homes and of swelling the ranks of
16 homeless people in New York City.

17 An increase of any size is a
18 virtual death warrant of tens of thousands of
19 elderly folks with compromised immunity systems.
20 We are unable to pay rent now because of the loss
21 of income and we will not be able to ever catch up
22 and pay the arrears.

23 What New York City and its
24 residents living in rent regulated apartments need
25 from this board is not a relief from rent increases

1

2 but relief from unconscionable and unaffordable
3 rent obligations, which only diminish the quality
4 of life of more than a million people while
5 unjustly enriching an industry which consistently
6 and intentionally refuses to properly maintain
7 their buildings, to provide adequate services,
8 including heat and hot water and quality repairs in
9 exchange for the rents that they tell to pay.

10 We need a rent rollback, not a
11 rent increase, not a rent freeze. Nothing less
12 than a rent rollback is acceptable.

13 Thank you for listening to my
14 testimony.

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Mr.
16 Christian.

17 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Our next speaker
18 is going to be Genner Lee.

19 MR. LEE: Hello.

20 CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

21 MR. LEE: Should I use my video
22 or is that --

23 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I think at this
24 point we're staying to just --

25 MR. LEE: That's fine.

1

2

Thank you.

3

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah.

4

5

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25

MR. LEE: I'm a third generation property owner of two tenements in Chinatown. I am not going to expound on the figures that were so expertly laid out before this board by my colleagues in the industry.

Instead, I'm going to focus on a narrative that seems to be accepted by this board. Yesterday, I heard a woman named Sara W., speaker No. 27, say that the idea of mom and pop landlords is a myth.

I'm here to tell you that my family's 96-year history in Chinatown as property owners is not mythical. Our contributions to our community benefit our tenants, who are low income people of color. We know our tenants and their struggles because we are them. I am them.

So when we hear from a woman yesterday who feels qualified to reduce our existence in New York to mythical, she effectively eliminates the struggles and the stories of immigrants to this City who earned the right to own a part of the American dream.

1
2 If people of color no longer own
3 small properties in New York, not only will the
4 City become unaffordable, it will live on without a
5 sole and without a trace of our authentic
6 existence. By calling us a myth, she advances the
7 narrative that hurts not only people of color as a
8 whole but it hurts small landlords by effectively
9 focusing on creating laws and guidelines designed
10 to target the Jared Kushners, the Steve Cromans of
11 this City, who I feel are the most reprehensible
12 and wretched of humanity. We are not them.

13 We are proud people of color who
14 have overcome hurdles such as laws that banned our
15 immigration as a race, micro aggressions by the
16 Sara W.'s of the world and policies designed to
17 benefit only big corporate players in the real
18 estate industry.

19 Sara W. got to say her peace
20 yesterday. Her hurtful words were unchallenged by
21 this board. Therefore, you are complicit in her
22 portrayal of us as mythical and that's the problem.
23 Your silence yesterday was my indication that while
24 I hear shouting in the streets around me, you hear
25 nothing. You can change this narrative. You can

1

2 accept reality. Work with us to understand who we
3 are.

4

5 Push aside Sara W.'s intentional
6 racism, rise above and listen to us. Grow as a
7 board and demand the next time someone denies our
8 histories and our contributions and our very
9 existence as people of color, stop them and say
10 that that is not true.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Mr.
13 Lee.

14

15 MR. LEE: Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

18

19 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Our next speaker
20 will be Kim Statuto.

21

22 MS. STATUTO: Hello.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello, Ms.

25

26 Spatuto.

27

28 MS. STATUTO: How are you?

29

30 CHAIRMAN REISS: Good.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MS. STATUTO: Great.

35

36 Good evening. My name is Kim

37

38 Statuto.

39

40 First and foremost, I am a human

1

2 being.

3

4 Second, I'm a resident of 26 years
5 at 1515 Selwin Avenue, Bronx, New York 10457.

6

7 Third, my landlord was listed as
8 No. 4 on the worst landlord list for 2019. And as
9 I've been listening to this testimony from
10 different aspects and from different people, I hear
11 it.

12

13 I'm demanding a rent rollback. I
14 have a landlord that had me without gas for 14
15 months. And I think the RGB knows this because I
16 was here last year testifying to the same thing.

17

18 I have a landlord that in a middle
19 of a pandemic had us without heat or hot water for
20 the first 17 days of April.

21

22 I have a landlord that the courts
23 do not hold accountable.

24

25 I have a landlord that HPD does
not hold accountable.

26

27 I have a landlord that continues
28 to charge illegal fees on my rent bill.

29

30 Okay.

31

32 And to ask me to give him a rent
33 increase when he mistreats me daily. Daily.

34

1

2

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25

After living there for 26 years, I am disabled. He does nothing to help my building and he doesn't deserve an increase.

There are many landlords like Abdul Khan in the Bronx.

Now for the good ones, thank you.

But mine is the worse. And I don't want him to get a rent increase.

I'd like a rent rollback.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Ms. Statuto.

MS. STATUTO: Thank you.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Our next speaker will be Laura Gavin.

MS. GAVIN: Where's my phone?

Hi. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

MS. GAVIN: Hi. My name is Laura Gavin. I'm a former nurse --

CHAIRMAN REISS: If you can speak closer to the phone. It's a little hard to hear you.

MS. GAVIN: Can you hear me now?

1

2

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sure.

3

4

MS. GAVIN: My name is Laura
Gavin. I'm a former nurse and (Zoom inaudible).

5

6

I live at 1504 Sheridan Avenue for
32 years. I was evicted from my home (Zoom

7

inaudible.).

8

9

The landlord is Schner Holding
Company (Zoom inaudible.)

10

11

(Zoom inaudible) in the New York
City (muffled).

12

And (interference) court.

13

14

I remain homeless and -- and prior
to (Zoom inaudible) I had issues involving MCI

15

charges, DHCR rent reduction quarterly. Zoom

16

inaudible), which are partly on the (inaudible.)

17

18

And some of which the family
members have succession rights, such as I at 1504

19

Sheridan Avenue. (Zoom inaudible.)

20

The (Zoom inaudible)

21

discriminating but nothing that can erase the pain

22

and suffering and the damage to my life.

23

24

However, if they don't take the
initiative to roll back our rent, there will be a

25

lot of people experiencing the same thing that I'm

1

2 experiencing now.

3

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
4 your testimony.

5

MS. GAVIN: You're welcome.

6

MS. GARCIA: I don't think that
7 you'll -- so when I count, it's actually Yoselyn.
8 I'm going to confirm.

9

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I'm sorry.

10 Which one was she?

11

MS. BURGER: She's one of the
12 names that had been previously advertised.

13

MS. GARCIA: Yeah. She's also
14 waiting by her phone on the actual line and she's
15 like wondering why her name hasn't come up yet.

16

MS. BURGER: Well, she said she
17 was testifying -- you're talking about Yoselyn;
18 yes?

19

MS. GARCIA: Correct.

20

MS. BURGER: She said she was
21 testifying by video. So if she wants to do it on
22 the phone, if you could end me her phone number.

23

MS. GARCIA: All right.

24

Can you -- can you e-mail me your
25 number. Because I feel like I'm not getting any

1

2 replies to communicate with you.

3

4 MS. BURGER: Have you -- you sent
me an e-mail?

5

6 I'll send you an e-mail with my
cell phone.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REISS: Andrew, could we
move on to somebody else in the interim.

9

10 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I'm working on
it.

11

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

12

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Sorry.

13

14 MS. BURGER: Andrew, I sent you
a -- I sent you a text that Maria Cordones is on
15 the line. Her phone number ends with 982. 347
16 ends with 982.

17

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: 982.

18

19 MS. BURGER: I can do it if you
want.

20

21 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, if you
can do it. Go ahead. Please.

22

MS. BURGER: Hi, Maria.

23

MS. CORDONES: (Speaking Spanish.)

24

CHAIRMAN REISS: Your testimony --

25

MS. CORDONES: (Speaking Spanish)

1

2

(Spanish Translation)

3

4

5

MS. CORDONES: "Good afternoon! My name is Maria Cordones. Greetings to all of you who are participating in this conference!

6

7

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21

I live in a private house in the Bronx. I'd like to inform the RGB that we're going through a horrifyingly unpleasant crisis. We'd ask the RGB, along with all other elected officials who run this City, to have mercy upon this City. This City can no longer stand by and allow the very same people who instructed us to close down our businesses and stay at home, sit back and do nothing and make no money...All of you, the RGB and City administrators need to sit at the negotiating table and agree that you all instructed the entire City to sit at home during this pandemic. And, to close businesses down...In other words, those of us who pay rent are not making money to make any rent payments. I beg of you, please, look inside your hearts.

22

23

24

25

I am sure that all City administrators and members of the RGB own their own home. However, there are many who are stressed and are panicking among those of us who make rent

1

2 payments, as well as small businesses. Many of them
3 are on the verge of madness. Many will commit
4 suicide, slit their wrists, or jump off the nearest
5 bridge because they simply have no way of paying
6 their rent. When Obama was in power, many committed
7 suicide because they had nothing to eat."

8 MS. BURGER: I think maybe a good
9 idea with the -- to announce some of the names of
10 the people who said they were going to call in on
11 the telephone. Because we have their phone numbers
12 and there's no way to fake that.

13 CHAIRMAN REISS: Well, that's
14 good.

15 MS. BURGER: So read out some
16 names. Yeah, actually -- oh, you know what, I
17 see -- I see Kate Yale. Kate, we'll get to you in
18 a minutes.

19 Joseph Veltri;

20 Ramon Catella;

21 Andre Vargas;

22 Luigi Arlia;

23 Bienvenida Paez;

24 Gavino Lopez;

25 I think we'll leave it for there

1

2 for right now and we'll announce some more later.
3 But if you heard your name if you could please give
4 us a call from the phone number that you used to
5 register. And we will go to Kate Yale.

6

Kate, you're on.

7

(No response.)

8

MS. BURGER: Kate.

9

10 MS. GARCIA: She hasn't been
promoted.

11

MS. BURGER: She is unmuted.

12

CHAIRMAN REISS: Ms. Yale.

13

(No response.)

14

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Ms. Yale, if
you're there, we can't hear you.

16

(No response.)

17

18 MS. BURGER: Okay. I'm going
to -- we'll move on to the next person and we'll
19 come back to her.

20

Andrew, do you have anybody?

21

(No response.)

22

23 MS. BURGER: And just as a
reminder, you can come in and out of Zoom if you
24 did not log into Zoom with your full name that was
25 used to register. We'll ask that you leave and

1

2 then come back in with the name that you used to
3 register.

4

We're only going to be going by
5 first and last names that were used to register.

6

Sorry about that but we don't have
7 a choice at this point.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: So, Danielle,
9 just to be clear, if you registered just with your
10 first name or with your first name and your last
11 initial, we won't be able to call on you. It's
12 only if we can see your first and last name when
13 you come on that we can call on you.

14

MS. BURGER: Everyone who
15 registered has a full name. So if you registered
16 under the name John Doe and you come in as John or
17 John D., we need to see your full name, Joe Doe.
18 And you can leave and come back in. It's not going
19 to affect anything. But you need to have your full
20 name there.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: And we need to
22 do this so -- so your identity is not spoofed by
23 the Zoom bomber.

24

MS. BURGER: Exactly.

25

CHAIRMAN REISS: I see Juanita

1

2 Rodriguez on the screen. Is that who we promoted.

3 MS. RODRIGUEZ: (Speaking
4 Spanish.)5 CHAIRMAN REISS: Andrew, is
6 that -- are we ready to hear from Ms. Rodriguez.

7 Yes. Welcome.

8 MS. GARCIA: Hola, Juanita.
9 (Speaking Spanish.)10 MS. RODRIGUEZ: (Speaking
11 Spanish.)

12 MS. GARCIA: She can't hear us.

13 CHAIRMAN REISS: She can't hear
14 us.15 MS. GARCIA: That's what she's
16 saying.

17 (Speaking Spanish.)

18 MS. RODRIGUEZ: (Speaking
19 Spanish.)

20 MS. GARCIA: (Speaking Spanish.)

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Hello.

22 CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

23 MS. RODRIGUEZ: (Speaking
24 Spanish.)

25 MS. GARCIA: She's saying that

1

2 she can't hear us.

3

4 MS. BURGER: She should start
5 giving her testimony.

6

7 MS. GARCIA: She can't hear us so
8 she doesn't know to start. That's why I'm trying
9 to help with.

10

11 So just one second.

12

13 Juanita. (Speaking Spanish).

14

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaking Spanish.

16

17 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

18

19 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Hello. Hello.

20

21 (Speaking Spanish.)

22

23 MS. GARCIA: Juanita --

24

25 MS. BURGER: She doesn't need to
hear. She just needs to speak.

26

27 MS. GARCIA: I understand but she
28 doesn't know what you're saying.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REISS: But we can hear
31 her.

32

33 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Let her know
34 that we can hear her.

35

36 MS. GARCIA: I know but I have to
37 let her know that and I have to take the time to do
38 it.

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25

Can we make that same announcement that we just made on the English line that Liz just made to Juanita or to try to figure out how to communicate with her.

She's on the phone, therefore, she's not even answering my text messages.

THE INTERPRETER: He's interpreting at this time. She should hear him on the Spanish line.

MS. GARCIA: She can't because she's on the Zoom line.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Can we move on to someone else as we try to resolve this technological issue.

Andrew, do you have anyone else we can speak with in the interim?

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Hum.

MS. GARCIA: Jocelyn was like a speaker that was there. Her last digits are showing up on the attendees' list. They're 287.

She was like No. 9 on the Spanish speakers list.

MS. BURGER: No, I don't have her phone number. What are the first three digits?

1
2 MS. GARCIA: The last three
3 digits?
4 MS. BURGER: What are the first
5 three digits?
6 MS. GARCIA: I know but if I --
7 CHAIRMAN REISS: What is the area
8 code?
9 MS. BURGER: What's the area
10 code?
11 MS. GARCIA: 646.
12 MS. BURGER: And what are the last
13 three digits?
14 MS. GARCIA: 287. I'm looking at
15 it right now. It's like halfway in the list of
16 Spanish attendees -- like the list of phone
17 numbers, a little bit below half.
18 MS. BURGER: Okay. She's on.
19 MS. GARCIA: Hello, Yoselyn.
20 MS. GOMEZ: Hola.
21 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.
22 MS. GOMEZ: Buenas noches.
23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Buenas Noches.
24 MS. GOMEZ: Speaking Spanish.
25 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

1

2

MS. GOMEZ: Speaking Spanish.

3

(Spanish translation)

4

MS. GOMEZ: "Good evening! My name is Jocelyn Gómez and I'm both a leader with CASA and an activist here in the Bronx. I'm here to support the people at my organization, CASA. However, you shouldn't be holding this public meeting and we, the NYC tenants, shouldn't even have to be here. It's a shame given the conditions we're currently living in and the pain we've experienced, especially Blacks and Latinos, that we're here today speaking to you so that we don't see an increase in rents.

15

Why do I say this? You've all heard the others participants speak tonight. It's a pity that you've had to listen to all of us speak at this public meeting. Mr. de Blasio should have cancelled all of these public hearings. There shouldn't have even been talk of a rent increase. It's an injustice! Why is it an injustice? We are human beings. Landlords are entitled to a 39.5% increase in benefits. Why can't they make less money? Can you imagine owning the kind of business where you make 40% in earnings? Last Friday, two

25

1

2 laws were passed giving them all sorts of
3 prerogatives and tax exemptions. We get slapped in
4 the face. It's shameful to even host this public
5 meeting when this country has experienced so much
6 pain and loss of loved ones. Those of you who are
7 landlords, who've always reaped the benefits from
8 everything, want to continue exploiting us. We want
9 fair rents because you have not lost anything.

10

Thank you very much!

11

12

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for

13

your testimony.

14

MS. GOMEZ: Speaking Spanish.

15

(Spanish Translation)

16

17

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

18

MS. GOODRIDGE: Just a quick

19

note.

20

Thank you for your testimony.

21

Just a quick note, Councilmember

22

Mark Levine is having trouble getting on and I

23

think he is one of the folks who should be up to

24

testify but it looks like he's having trouble.

25

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: No, we see him.

1

2 We see him.

3 MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay. I'm sorry.

4 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, we'll get
5 to him.6 MS. GOODRIDGE: I got an e-mail.
7 So I'm sorry.8 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Let's --
9 actually, let's get -- I guess let's take him.10 MS. BURGER: Yes. His name was
11 said so --12 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: We have to take
13 him if his name was said. Yeah.

14 Okay, Mark. You're on.

15 COUNCILMEMBER LEVINE: Well thank
16 you so much, Andrew, for allowing me to speak in
17 the midst of a very busy schedule this evening.18 I have had the pleasure of
19 speaking to the Rent Guidelines Board in many prior
20 years calling for a rent freeze at a minimum. But
21 I don't think there's ever been a year where the
22 case has been stronger than it is right now.23 I represent a district in Northern
24 Manhattan that includes communities of West Harlem
25 and Washington Heights and Morningside Heights.

1

2 Some of the highest percentage of rent regulated
3 units of anywhere in the City and I can tell you
4 that tenants in this community are experiencing a
5 devastating economic shock, unlike anything that
6 I've seen in my lifetime.

7 A widespread loss of income that
8 has resulted, even in challenges for families who
9 pay for basic needs like food. And it's imposing
10 enormous hardship on the people of this district,
11 on the tenants of this district. And sadly, this
12 economic shock is going to continue. We are not
13 going to be out of this for awhile. And it would
14 be simply unthinkable to add to this pain by
15 increasing rents right now for the poorest amongst
16 us.

17 There is a compelling case to, at
18 a minimum, not make this economic crisis worse by
19 adding to the burden of these tenants. And I think
20 there's a market case as well here at a time when
21 rents in non-regulated stock are falling because of
22 broader shifts in the economy and residential
23 patterns and that only makes it more profound --
24 dog barking -- sorry for the background noise. My
25 dog agrees.

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And finally, I think, a fair assessment of costs shows that some of the key components driving landlord expenses, like oil are also at near record lows.

So for all these reasons, I am here to forcefully call for a rent freeze this year.

Thank you very much for allowing me to testify.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Councilmember.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: So our next speaker requested to speak in Spanish.

His name is Andre Vargas.

MR. VARGAS: Hello.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

MR. VARGAS: Speaking Spanish.

MS. GARCIA: Speaking in Spanish.

MR. VARGAS: Speaking in Spanish.

(Spanish Translation)

MR. VARGAS: "Hello, my name is Andrés Vargas and I live at 10-50 Carroll Place in the Bronx. I just wanted to offer some testimony since we are not able to work at the moment. I

1

2 belong to CASA. We had a problem here in our
3 building and CASA was able to help us.

4

Our landlord had lots of court
5 cases against him and many repairs needed to be
6 completed. We managed to take him to court.

7

Currently, many of us are unemployed and our
8 landlord and the RGB should help us. The governor
9 should also show his support because there are many
10 of us who were told to stay at home. We ask that
11 you listen to our demands the same that we adhered
12 to the law. They should help us! Those of you in
13 charge of making rent increases, please stand in
14 our shoes. We have no jobs and we have very little
15 support. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you!"

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
17 your testimony.

18

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I'm sorry,
19 David. I'm in the process of finding the next
20 speaker.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

22

MS. BURGER: Andrew, did you try
23 to get Kate Yale on the phone again? Not the
24 video, the phone?

25

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: What -- what's

1

2 the last three digits? I don't --

3

MS. BURGER: Well, she's on -- now
4 the phone number's on here twice. So I'm really
5 confused.

6

Kate, if you're listening, your
7 phone number is showing up twice. Can you hang up
8 one of your devices.

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Can she be being
10 spoofed or is that not likely?

11

MS. BURGER: I don't know.

12

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila thinks
13 she might be being spoofed.

14

MS. BURGER: I don't know how her
15 phone number would have gotten out there.

16

Okay. We'll look for someone
17 else.

18

MS. GARCIA: So I have some folks
19 that we skipped through. The last three digits of
20 Bianca is on and she is 588. She's currently as an
21 attendee.

22

Simone is also on, a Spanish
23 speaker, 791. If you could look for those numbers.

24

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay. And I'm
25 sorry, Bianca's is 718 her first three?

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MS. GARCIA: Oh, geez. That's tougher for me. She's using her house phone. I don't have that number -- yes, 718 it is.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay. She's good to go.

MS. GARCIA: Hey, Bianca. You can give your testimony now.

BIANCA: Thank you, Sheila.

Hi. Good evening.

My name is Bianca Jones. I am a member of CASA. I live at 815 Gerard Avenue in the Bronx for over 30 years.

My landlord is Pakish (phonetic) Management. I pay close to 50 percent of my income towards rent each month. I am a senior on a fixed income.

Yes, we do have issues in our building that needs to be addressed.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, we the tenants are going through a lot right now. And a rent rollback at this time would be a great help to many of us living in this City.

And I thank you for your time and patience.

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CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
your testimony.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: And Sheila, who
was the other one?

MS. GARCIA: The last three digits
are 791. And I think it's a 718 area code but he's
calling from his home number because he did not
want to use the number that he registered with.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: 791.

MS. GARCIA: Yeah.

I just saw him. I don't know if
he's still there.

MS. BURGER: I don't see that
phone number.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, I don't
see that phone number either.

MS. BURGER: Can he press star 9
to raise his hand.

MS. GARCIA: Can we look for --
oh, he's calling from 516 actually -- 5629 are the
last four. Area code 716 -- I mean, 516. Sorry.

MS. BURGER: There's nobody like
that on here.

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Is he calling

1

2 the right webinar.

3

MS. GARCIA: I -- oh, okay.

4

Sorry. Can we pull up 516 area code?

5

MS. BURGER: Area code's calling

6

in.

7

MS. BURGER: There's nobody from a

8

516 area code calling in.

9

MS. GARCIA: She says she's on.

10

That's weird.

11

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: In the meantime

12

when we figure it out, I'm going to go to

13

Jacqueline Ball. Are you ready to speak,

14

Jacqueline?

15

MS. BALL: Yes, I am.

16

Hi. I'm Jacqueline Ball. And I'm

17

a Harlem resident. I moved here in 2012 and my

18

rent was a little over \$1,000. Now when I sign my

19

lease, it's \$1,800. That's way too much for -- and

20

I want to thank the board first of all, I forgot to

21

do that, for listening to us because tenants really

22

need help, as I've heard so many other say.

23

I'm a senior as well. I'm retired

24

from the military and really anything that the

25

board can do to help tenants would be appreciated,

1

2 either a rent freeze or definitely the rollback.

3

And that's all I want to say.

4

Thank you so much for your time.

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for

6

your testimony.

7

MS. BURGER: David, I think we

8

have our City Councilperson.

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Who is it,

10

Danielle?

11

MS. BURGER: I don't want to say.

12

I texted you.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Oh, okay. Let

14

me see.

15

Okay. So can you just put the

16

Councilmember on.

17

MS. BURGER: Vanessa Gibson,

18

you're on.

19

COUNCILMEMBER GIBSON: Yes, thank

20

you so much.

21

Good evening, ladies and

22

gentlemen.

23

And thank you so much to the Rent

24

Guidelines Board for your time.

25

First and foremost, I want to lift

1

2 up all the families, all New Yorkers that have been
3 impacted by COVID-19, those who many have lost a
4 loved one, a family member, a friend, those that
5 are on the road to recovery, we pray for everyone
6 that's been affected.

7 And I also wanted to sincerely
8 thank all of our first line responders and front
9 line workers who have been doing so much every day
10 across our great City.

11 I'm Councilmember Vanessa Gibson.
12 I'm proud to speak remotely to all of you this
13 evening. I represent Council District 16 in the
14 Bronx, which includes Claremont, Claremont Village,
15 Concourse, Concourse Village, Highbridge,
16 Morrisania, Morris Heights and Mt. Eden.

17 And as you evaluate rent
18 guidelines for the upcoming fiscal year, I am sure
19 you can imagine the hundreds and hundreds of
20 thousands of tenants that are looking to each one
21 of you for your support during this unprecedented
22 time.

23 The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak
24 that struck our nation has profoundly challenged
25 the social and economic resources available to our

1

2 families. I express my condolence and praise to
3 everyone who's been personally affected and
4 understand that we will get through these very
5 trying times as a City.

6 I want to recognize and thank all
7 of the housing and the tenant advocates, legal
8 service providers and tenants themselves who
9 continue to work remotely, providing guidance and
10 services to clients. Although the courts have been
11 closed and we have a moratorium on evictions, we
12 all know and understand the magnitude of what some
13 landlords will go through to harass and displace
14 tenants.

15 As we have all been working
16 remotely to flatten the curve and get back to
17 normalcy, these days preparing for an uncertain
18 future, I ask you, RGB members, to consider how you
19 will choose to help those most impacted by
20 COVID-19? What role will you play in the
21 rebuilding and healing of our City and what side of
22 history do you choose to be on?

23 Many low income residents are
24 dependent on the support of RGB to keep our City
25 affordable and open to all. Although we say

1

2 affordable, we know that this is a far reach for
3 many families on fixed and low incomes.

4

5 So I'm asking you to take a bold
6 and courageous step to address the rising cost of
7 rent on all of our rent stabilized units.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you,
10 Councilmember.

11

12 COUNCILMEMBER GIBSON: Many --
13 Thank you so very much.

14

15 I appreciate your time tonight.
16 And I stand with everyone. We're asking for a rent
17 rollback.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

22

23 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: So our next
24 speaker is Maria Aguirre. I don't know if I'm
25 saying that correctly. A Spanish speaker.

26

27 MS. AGUIRRE: Speaking Spanish.

28

29 MS. GARCIA: I saw her. Okay.

30

31 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: There she is.

32

33 MS. AGUIRRE: Si.

34

35 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REISS: Buenas tardes.

38

39 MS. AGUIRRE: Speaking Spanish.

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(Spanish Translation)

MS. AGUIRRE: "Good evening! My name is María Aguirre and I represent Movement for Justice in el Barrio. We are an organization located in East Harlem made up of low-income families who are fighting for adequate housing and fighting against displacement, without taking into account gender, religion, skin color, etc. Today

I'd like to say no rent increase! Affordable housing is indispensable for low-income communities. Due to Covid-19, low income families and individuals are going through very difficult times. The majority of them have gone without a job or an income since March. We haven't made rent payments in months because there's no way to do so. We have to decide between purchasing groceries and paying the rent. We have no idea when we'll be back at work. Even if we do go back to work, the effects of this pandemic will be long lasting. I can personally attest to the hard times people are going through. My family and I came down with Covid-19 in March. In fact, my mother-in-law passed away from Covid-19 in April. My husband and I have been unemployed since we became ill. Both the loss

1

2 of life and economic resources have been
3 devastating.

4 For us, and for many other
5 families, it will be very difficult to begin saving
6 money for what we already owe in back rent. If you
7 decide on passing the rent increase, it'll be much
8 more difficult for all of us. This is why I say no
9 to the increase! No rent increase on 1-year or
10 2-year leases. That is all. Thank you so much!"

11 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you so
12 much.

13 EMILY: I'd like to report --
14 hello. Can you hear me?

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: I'm sorry. Your
16 name is?

17 EMILY: My name is Emily. But I
18 would just like to --

19 CHAIRMAN REISS: I'm sorry.
20 Before you continue, Andrew is this our next
21 speaker?

22 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I don't believe
23 so, no.

24 CHAIRMAN REISS: All right.

25 So we see where Emily --

1

2

EMILY: Hi. No, I just want to

3

repeat what Maria had said.

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: Oh, I'm sorry.

5

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Were you on the

6

phone with Maria?

7

MS. GARCIA: It's Maria talking,

8

guys.

9

MS. AGUIRE: Yes. I'm on the

10

line.

11

CHAIRMAN REISS: I'm sorry.

12

Go ahead.

13

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay.

14

EMILY: Okay.

15

Thank you.

16

Thank you very much.

17

I'm just going to repeat what she

18

said in English.

19

MS. GARCIA: Oh, they already

20

translated.

21

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: They got the

22

translation.

23

MS. GARCIA: There's

24

interpretation happening.

25

EMILY: I know but -- I want to

1

2 repeat it one more time.

3 CHAIRMAN REISS: Each speaker has
4 two minutes.

5 EMILY: People come here and --

6 CHAIRMAN REISS: Emily, each
7 speaker has two minutes.

8 EMILY: -- and I want to make sure
9 that the board can hear it in English.

10 CHAIRMAN REISS: Emily, each
11 speaker has two minutes.

12 EMILY: Is that okay, please?
13 It's just two minutes. It's exactly what she said.

14 CHAIRMAN REISS: You know, we have
15 many people. I'd like to keep to the -- to the
16 schedule. If you want to after the registered
17 speakers have gone, if you want to speak in your
18 own capacity, Emily, you're welcome to.

19 Andrew, do we have another
20 speaker?

21 MS. BURGER: Yes, Fabian Brava.
22 Fabian, if you could unmute
23 yourself.

24 (No response.)

25 MS. BURGER: Fabian, are you

1

2 there?

3

MR. BRAVA: Speaking Spanish.

4

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Good evening.

6

MR. BRAVA: Speaking Spanish.

7

(Spanish Translation)

8

MR. BRAVO: "Good evening to

9

everyone! My name is Fabián and I'm with the

10

organization Neighbors-helping-neighbors. I live in

11

Sunset Park in Brooklyn, NY.

12

Because of Covid-19, hundreds of

13

people are unemployed and they have no money to pay

14

the rent for the next few months. Added to this are

15

the countless court cases that will undoubtedly be

16

filed at housing Court. Due to lack of payments,

17

landlords will begin these actions. For this

18

reason, I believe, and I share in the same vision

19

of hundreds of tenants: no more rent increase!

20

Please, we are asking for no more rent increase!

21

Please, listen to all of the testimony. Please,

22

base your decision on the principles upon which

23

this country was founded. Principles involving

24

justice, freedom, and kindness. Again, we ask that

25

there be no more rent increase. Thank you!"

1

2

3

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
your testimony.

4

MS. GARCIA: Gracias.

5

6

MS. BURGER: Hello. Are you on
the line?

7

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Say again,
Danielle?

9

MS. BURGER: Ramon Catala.

10

MR. CATALA: Okay. Hello.

11

(Spanish Translation)

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25

MR. CATALA: "Good afternoon to
everyone! My name is Ramón Cátala and I live at
16-85 Tompkins Avenue in the Bronx. I'd like to
remind both the RGB and the five public members who
are at the helm that this is not the right time to
talk about rent issues with all the other problems
going on. Hundreds of people are dying on a daily
basis due to the pandemic. And it seems like there
is no end in sight. Millions of people have lost
their jobs. Many tenants no longer have any money
to continue buying food for their families. I ask
the RGB members present here today to make a
decision based on what they see happening all over
the United States. See you soon! Thanks for

1

2 everything!"

3

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for

5

your testimony.

6

MS. BURGER: We have Josephina

7

Ventura.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Welcome Ms.

9

Ventura.

10

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

11

Spanish.

12

MR. BURGER: Josephina, can you

13

unmute yourself, please.

14

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

15

Spanish.

16

MS. BURGER: Josephina, last

17

chance. Please unmute yourself.

18

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

19

Spanish.

20

MS. GARCIA: How do folks unmute

21

themselves on this line?

22

MS. VENTURA: I'm here.

23

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: There she is.

24

MS. VENTURA: Oh, hi.

25

Good evening.

1

2 CHAIRMAN REISS: Good evening.

3 MS. VENTURA: My name is Josephina
4 Ventura from Riverside Association in Washington
5 Heights.

6 And my -- the purpose of my call
7 is to ask the Rent Guidelines board to approve a
8 rent -- the reduction. A rent rollback, two
9 percent roll back.

10 There are a couple of reason why I
11 consider the landlords are not having lost any
12 more. They are having profits.

13 First, they were bailed out by the
14 federal government with the payroll protection
15 program to pay the payroll to their employees. It
16 also covered rent and expenses, electricity, any
17 kind of communication expense that they have.

18 On top of that, the -- all prices
19 are at a record low right now.

20 They are also getting credits from
21 insurance companies. When they coverage their
22 employees. So what kind of losses are they talking
23 about the landlord has?

24 We, the people are the one who
25 suffering with all this economic crunch. Millions

1

2 of our employees were laid off or their salaries
3 were reduced. Their working hours were reduced.

4

We have lost everything. I have
5 people who have come to me and told me, Ms.

6

Ventura, tell me what am I going to do? I have

7

three kids and then I have to pay -- I have to pay

8

the rent and food on top of my payment for my kids.

9

And I tell them, just feed your kids.

10

On top of that, whatever right now

11

we receive from the government, \$400, \$2,500. It's

12

not enough when the rents are right now \$1,800,

13

\$2,000, \$2,500. It's so expensive. It's plenty

14

expensive.

15

Please, I beg you to approve a

16

rent rollback of three percent.

17

Thank you so much.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Ms.

19

Ventura.

20

MS. BURGER: We have Nadia Matea.

21

MS. MATEA: Hello.

22

MS. BURGER: Nadia, go ahead.

23

MS. MATEA: Hello. Good evening

24

all. I hope everyone can hear me.

25

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, we can.

1

2

MS. MATEA: Great.

3

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25

My name is Nadia. I am a resident with 1515 Selwin Avenue. I am a tenant leader, CASA leader and our -- our pandemic, his name is Abdul Khan. We've been suffering with this pandemic for about ten years. We didn't have gas due to illegal piping from anywhere from 14 to 16 months.

And not just dealing with the illegal piping but dealing over 500 violations. And when the courts would have their judgment, he wouldn't care.

Then in April for two weeks we had no heat or hot water. So I want to ask the RGB, people who think that it's okay to give a raise. Every time you get a haircut and they mess up your haircut, you give them a raise because you feel that bad service should be rewarded.

Every time you go to a restaurant and you find an animal in your food, you give them a raise. You give them a tip for you feel it's worth rewarding bad service.

Explain to me how is rewarding bad service helpful for -- for this economy. It's

1

2 going to allow people to continue do bad service.

3

4 He ranks fourth in New York City's
5 worst landlords' list. That means there's three
6 worse than him, which is impossible to believe but
7 that means there's 96 learning from him.

8

9 So learn from our experience.
10 Take our experience. Don't just think about greed.
11 We are the ones that's suffering. Landlords are
12 not suffering.

13

14 So I ask you again, the next time
15 you are at a restaurant and you receive bad
16 service, don't give them a bad report on YELP,
17 still give them a tip because you believe bad
18 service should be rewarded.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
23 your testimony.

24

25 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I have -- I have
26 another speaker here.

27

28 MS. BURGER: I have Irvin Bennett
29 on the phone.

30

31 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Oh, Danielle,
32 you superceded me, I think.

33

34 MS. BURGER: I'm sorry.

1

2

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, we have

3

Gail Wilson.

4

MS. BURGER: I don't know what

5

happened to Irvin now.

6

MS. WILSON: Hello.

7

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Hello.

8

MS. WILSON: Hi. this is Gail.

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello. Just

10

testify.

11

MS. WILSON: Good.

12

I'm sorry.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello, Gail?

14

(No response.)

15

MS. WILSON: Hello.

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, we can hear

17

you.

18

MS. WILSON: Okay. I've lived

19

here since 1977. The rent would systematically

20

increase from \$309 when I first moved in to by 470

21

percent to \$1,452.34 currently.

22

That's 89 percent of my Social

23

Security income at this time.

24

After my other necessities of

25

electricity, internet and phone charges, at

1

2 approximately \$210 a month, I'm struggling to live,
3 without food. I have a negative \$34 each month.

4

5 Since the pandemic shut down, I'm
6 currently under threat of eviction by my landlord
7 and there is little to no alternative that does not
8 include leaving New York.

8

9 Additionally, the application for
10 the limited New York City affordable housing are so
11 overwhelming that I probably will be a distant
12 memory before that comes to fruition.

12

13 In consideration of the
14 aforementioned and the current general
15 circumstances of the majority of New York
16 residents, a rent reduction or abatement should be
17 under consideration. But since that may not be an
18 option, I ask for a decision for a zero percent
19 increase.

19

20 Thank you.

20

21 MS. BURGER: We have Irvin Bennett
22 on the phone.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
24 your testimony.

24

25 MS. BURGER: Irvin, you can start.

25

(No response.)

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MS. GARCIA: Bennett -- I don't think Bennett can hear us. I think it's the same thing --

MR. BENNETT: Hello.

MS. GARCIA: Oh, okay.

MR. BENNETT: Hello. Welcome. I'm hearing you.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

MR. BENNETT: Hello.

MS. GARCIA: You can start your testimony.

MR. BENNETT: Yeah, good evening.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Good evening.

MR. BENNETT: My name is Irvin Bennett. I live at 215 East 154th Street for nine years.

And I've seen that coming to change a lot because we are seniors in this community. Where we have to choose to pay doctor bills or co-payment to doctors, co-payment for medication and to pay the next rent increase.

We can't afford it. I feel like the community has been changed because the past two years two of my community buildings have been sold.

1

2 And those two landlords are Einstein and LaSingh,
3 over ten residents have been evicted.

4

And now we are facing three MCIs.
5 One for cameras, one for roof and one for pointers.
6 And plus a rent increase. Who's helping us? I
7 can't do it. I have COVID-19.

8

We cannot find food for their
9 children. Think about. The balance is God have no
10 hand to use but ours. So please use the hand that
11 God gave you to roll back the rent. We cannot
12 stand another rent increase in this community.
13 Because we are going through a pandemic, we are
14 people who are losing their jobs.

15

Come on. We cannot take any rent
16 increase. Please roll back the rent.

17

Thank you.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
19 your testimony.

20

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I do have our
21 next speaker. Our next speaker is Benvenida-Paez,
22 requests to speak in Spanish.

23

MS. GARCIA: Speaking in Spanish.

24

MR. BENVENIDA-PAEZ: Speaking
25 Spanish.

1

2 MS. GARCIA: Speaking in Spanish.

3 MS. BENVENIDA-PAEZ: Hello my
4 name is Benvenida Paez. I am with CASA. I have
5 lived at 3534 Bronx Boulevard for almost 17 years.

6 The landlord is 3534 BB LLC,
7 Martin Katz managing.

8 I am asking for a rent rollback
9 not only for myself but for all the thousands of
10 tenants in the City. Because of all the detriment
11 and the human conditions that we have to live in
12 and because of the condition of the Corona Virus
13 that we are going through, losing all kinds of
14 members of our family, all kinds of jobs,
15 everything.

16 I am board certified and I have
17 worked with charity for 34 years, helping people in
18 many areas. Now I am disabled living with a
19 disabled child.

20 For the past six years, I have
21 been in an awful ordeal with the Katz Management,
22 going to court back and forth. I have been living
23 in an apartment in a very uncomfortable condition.
24 The apartment is like a storage waiting for the
25 bandages to comply with the court orders to do the

1

2 repairs. Because he disregards the court orders
3 and engage in all kinds of fraud.

4

5 He told me and proved to me that
6 he has paid the inspector to disappear from the
7 report, the violations that have been found. He
8 closed them. I have fallen and injured myself
9 several times. My daughter and a home attendant to
10 because of the uneven floor of the apartment.

11

12 My daughter hasn't been out of her
13 bedroom for the past three years and I have been
14 out of mine for six years that we are in court and
15 because the floor needs to be repaired. Every time
16 we go to court the managers agree to comply but
17 then he backs up.

18

19 In February he told me that he
20 don't need to do anything because the case is
21 closed and again he disregard the court order to
22 comply and to do the repairs. The manager is
23 violent and very disrespectful. He told me to call
24 the suicide line and to commit suicide.

25

26 I have been overcharged. I have
27 to pay illegal MCIs. The apartment has all kinds
28 of violations and conditions in need of repair.

29

30 This is not only my story. This

1

2 is a story of many people, thousands of people, my
3 neighbors, my friends --

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
5 your testimony.

6

MS. PAEZ: I am calling for you
7 please to roll back.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
9 your testimony.

10

MS. PAEZ: Thank you.

11

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Hold on, David.
12 I think we may have found someone else. I just
13 want to double check.

14

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

15

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Just give me one
16 second.

17

MS. BURGER: Does anybody
18 remember if we heard from Maria Cordones?

19

MS. GARCIA: We did.

20

MS. BURGER: Okay.

21

I didn't mark it down.

22

Thank you.

23

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Danielle.

24

MS. BURGER: Yes.

25

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Can you check

1

2 the name I just texted.

3

MS. BURGER: All right.

4

Hold on one second.

5

She's -- she's on the list. Is

6

she here speaking? You found her name?

7

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah. And we

8

didn't -- we haven't announced it. That was my big

9

thing.

10

MS. BURGER: No, not that I marked

11

it.

12

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay.

13

All right.

14

So our next speaker is Marisol

15

Morales, who requested to speak in Spanish.

16

MS. MORALES: Speaking in

17

Spanish.

18

MS. GARCIA: Speaking in Spanish.

19

MS. MORALES: Speaking in Spanish.

20

(Spanish Translation)

21

MS. MORALES: "My name is Marisol

22

Morales and I live at 10-50 Caton Place. Before and

23

during this pandemic, we have suffered from rent

24

increases. At least in my case, I'm a single mother

25

who's raised three kids. Thank God I've been able to

1

2 steer them in the right direction so that they
3 don't become second class citizens. Unfortunately,
4 they are classified as such. We can no longer deal
5 with a rent increase. We ask that those who are in
6 power and whom we elected to fight for the people
7 and not for the rich.

8

 My landlord currently owns
9 seventy-five buildings. Why should politicians help
10 him to easily get a rent increase? We need your
11 help so that rents do not increase so that we can
12 raise our children. We are not fleeing from a
13 pandemic, but rather from looming evictions. After
14 all of this is over, you will see this happen en
15 masse. And we don't want your pity later on. We
16 want you to use the authority that the people have
17 given you. We want you to use that authority to
18 help us. We don't want to see these fat cats, as we
19 say, to get any richer at the expense of those who
20 are drowning and will be left with no home. Today
21 we have to share one living space among twenty
22 people. This is why the Coronavirus has heavily
23 affected the poor. Some apartments have been sublet
24 to as many as seven families. Your authority can
25 help us. We put you in power, please help us so

1

2 that the rent doesn't continue to increase. We
3 shouldn't have to flee NY. Thank you!"

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Ms.
5 Morales.

6

MS. GARCIA: Thank you.

7

MS. BURGER: We have Paulette New.

8

MS. NEW: Hi. Can you hear me?

9

Okay.

10

My name is --

11

MS. GARCIA: Thank you, Paulette.

12

MS. NEW: Thank you.

13

My name is Paulette New. I'm a
14 tenant leader of Bronx Park Phase 1. I've been
15 living in my complex for 34 years.

16

You know, landlord promise
17 professionalism, habitable services and stable
18 pricing that designs to promote long-term renting.

19

Now we should be getting a
20 rollback for the simple fact is that we are --
21 like, you know, it's so many evictions and there's
22 over two million evictions -- this is even before
23 the pandemic.

24

You know, what really hardship do
25 landlords have? I feel sorry for the small

1

2 landlord but we talking about private equity
3 landlords that's causing both small businesses and
4 tenants to suffer. And yet we need the board to
5 make sure that there's no rent increase this time.

6 Senior citizens, there's not going
7 to be a raise for the senior citizen. A lot of
8 people have to go back to work, including myself.
9 I'm a senior citizen but I went back to work
10 because we're not sure about the Social Security.

11 And like what statement did the
12 landlord said that they showing a hardship? So
13 we're asking for a rent rollback.

14 And my question is, also, is this,
15 is that with the private equity they cause eviction
16 to be profitable. It's cheaper to evict a tenant
17 than to do repairs. And yet they still constantly
18 ask for rent increase.

19 I'm just asking that you
20 reevaluate the rent increase and give us a rent
21 rollback.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
24 your testimony.

25 MS. BURGER: We have Naomi Ellis

1

2 on.

3

CHAIRMAN REISS: Wellcome.

4

MS. ELLIS: Hello.

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

6

MS. ELLIS: How you doing?

7

CHAIRMAN REISS: Good, thank you.

8

MS. ELLIS: I'm good. Okay.

9

Yes, I'm a Bronx resident. I live

10 at 190 West 117th in Highbridge.

11 My landlord is Morton Group. And

12 for the past several years he has not seen any

13 repairs until recently done to apartments. Some of

14 those repairs still need to be done.

15 And once again, like almost

16 everyone else said, we're constantly seeing rent

17 increases. However, even though rent is increasing

18 and everybody's rent -- and also everyone else's

19 bills, you don't see an increase to help that in

20 our wages. And with the pandemic going on, a lot

21 of us lost our jobs. I'm one of those people that

22 has to look for new work. And looking for new work

23 and having to pay off certain other things. Like

24 my grandmother also passed away so we had to get a

25 storage unit to hold some of her stuff. That's

1

2 another bill.

3

4 There's so many things that we
5 have to take care of that just to constantly keep
6 increasing our rent and then the landlords not
7 doing everything that they have to do for us as
8 tenants, it's putting us further in debt than
9 anything.

9

10 So I'm asking that the RGB please
11 reconsider -- strongly consider having a rent
12 rollback.

12

13 Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
15 your testimony.

15

16 MS. BURGER: We have David Belen
17 on the phone.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REISS: Welcome.

18

19 MS. GARCIA: Speaking in Spanish.

19

20 MR. BELEN: Hola.

20

21 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

21

22 MR. BELEN: Speaking Spanish.

22

23 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

23

24 MR. BELEN: Speaking Spanish.

24

25 (Spanish Translation)

25

MR. BELEN: "Good evening to

1
2 everyone! My name is David Belén. I live at 15-15
3 Selwyn. My building's landlord is Abdul Khan. He's
4 the fourth worst landlord. And I ask myself, how
5 can he own more than twenty buildings in NYC if he
6 is the fourth worst landlord? By granting a
7 landlord like Abdul Khan a rent increase would be
8 to reward him for his wrongdoing. So, I ask the
9 RGB, is your role to reward bad deeds or to be fair
10 and impartial? If you are supposed to be fair,
11 please make sure to do right by millions of tenants
12 who are living through a pandemic. I see only
13 evictions on the horizon.

14 Now family court, I mean housing
15 court is opening up to evict tenants and families
16 who've lost everything. We've lost our jobs. We've
17 lost our security. We've lost family members. Now,
18 we're at risk of losing our very homes, which is
19 all we have left. When you yourselves told us to
20 stay at home. How ironic is it that at first, you
21 told us to stay at home, and now during the
22 pandemic, you throw us out on the street. A rent
23 increase would not be fair. It's not fair to
24 anyone. I ask the RGB that instead of a rent
25 increase what all NYC tenants need is a rent

1

2 rollback. By asking for a rollback, we're not
3 asking for a favor. That is actually the fair thing
4 to do. Thank you for your time! I hope you not only
5 listen to my story. My story is not special. My
6 story is one of many belonging to people who were
7 not able to offer testimony tonight. Yet, that
8 doesn't mean that they aren't out there. Thank you
9 very much!"

10 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
11 your testimony.

12 MS. BURGER: And we have Gavino
13 Lopez.

14 MR. LOPEZ: Speaking Spanish.

15 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

16 MR. LOPEZ: Speaking Spanish.

17 (Spanish Translation)

18 MR. LOPEZ: "Good afternoon! Thank
19 you so much for your time and attention! My name is
20 Gavino Lopez and I represent CASA. I've been living
21 at 10-50 Carroll Place in the Bronx for fifteen
22 years. My landlord is John Whiteberger. I've been
23 living in NY for twenty years. However, despite
24 living here for twenty years, I still haven't been
25 able to build a future for myself. This happens to

1

2 all low-income families.

3

Affordable housing in NY

4

supposedly makes up 30% of our income. However, we

5

actually pay out 50% of our income. So, as you can

6

imagine, how can I build a better future for my

7

children or plan out a respectable retirement with

8

all of the increases that the City imposes upon us

9

on a yearly basis? Rent, food, public

10

transportation...And as if that weren't enough, we

11

get stuck with ghost increases like MCIs and IAIs,

12

while not getting any of the adequate services.

13

Please, forgive me! Perhaps you don't understand me

14

because you may not know of or need all of these

15

services. And this was all happening before the

16

pandemic. Can you imagine now after three months

17

with no income for our homes? The City and the

18

federal government have ignored our plea to receive

19

stimulus aid. That's without even mentioning the

20

fact that we have children who were born here and

21

the majority of us file our taxes. It is necessary

22

and I ask you to please place your hand over your

23

heart. We currently run the risk of being evicted

24

once the moratorium on rent payments issued by the

25

governor ends for April, May, and June. Have you

1

2 thought about where we're going to find the money
3 to pay all of that debt? Please, help us! Remember,
4 we are all New Yorkers and we will make it through
5 this together. Thank you and may God bless you!"

6 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

7 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
8 your testimony.

9 MS. BURGER: We need a minute to
10 see if we can find any more speakers. If I could
11 ask the staff --

12 MS. GOODRIDGE: There is one, is
13 there an Ignacio Diaz that we -- I got an e-mail
14 about this so -- sorry, I wasn't sure what was more
15 effective so I also e-mailed you, not to take up
16 space.

17 MS. BURGER: I'll double check.

18 I don't believe he's registered
19 though. I'll check.

20 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

21 MS. BURGER: No, he is not
22 registered to speak.

23 MS. GOODRIDGE: Oh, okay. If
24 someone doesn't register but they'd like to
25 register afterwards and we have time, would they be

1

2 allowed to speak?

3

MS. BURGER: Based on what's been going on, unless you can vouch for them, I would say no. If you can vouch for people at the end, certainly. But based on what's happened, I don't think we can just let people in.

8

MS. GARCIA: Danielle, can you tell us what that means, the vouching for? Like do you want us to get you their name and number that they're calling from? Like how does that work?

12

MS. BURGER: Yes.

13

MS. GARCIA: Because we could be doing that right now.

15

MS. BURGER: If you have the name and phone number of people who want to speak, do not say them publicly but send them to me. And if we have time at the end, if we know their name and phone number. But we're not going to publicly say any names any more.

21

MS. GOODRIDGE: All right.

22

So I e-mailed you about the one. So that one I guess is vouched for.

24

MS. BURGER: Yes. Get his name. So can you tell him to send you like an alias and

25

1

2 then give you the alias and he needs to come back
3 in under the alias and then he can give me the
4 alias because --

5 MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay.

6 And then, also, there is -- while
7 we're on the same topic, there's another speaker,
8 Dorco Reynoso (phonetic). She's trying to speak.
9 She's registered. I don't know if --

10 MS. BURGER: If she is registered,
11 I'll double check.

12 MS. GOODRIDGE: I'm sorry. I
13 don't know if I should be saying the folks' names
14 but I feel like that's the only way you know who
15 I'm talking about.

16 MS. BURGER: You can just say
17 their first name.

18 MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay.

19 MS. BURGER: She is not registered
20 to speak.

21 MS. GOODRIDGE: Oh.

22 MS. BURGER: She should do the
23 same thing.

24 MS. GOODRIDGE: I will e-mail you
25 now her information.

1
2 CHAIRMAN REISS: You know, board
3 members, you know, I'm just not sure that we should
4 just say that -- in terms of unregistered speakers,
5 I'm just not sure what the smartest thing to do is.
6 So I guess I'm going to say personally, although I
7 think we can make a decision collectively, I'd like
8 to hear from all the registered speakers and then
9 we have to make a decision as to the likelihood of
10 disruption and, you know, whether we're treating
11 everybody the same.

12 So as opposed to just having
13 certain people be able to -- to speak as an
14 unregistered speaker, I just want to make sure we
15 have a fair process.

16 So let's keep that in mind as
17 we --

18 (Overlapping conversation.)

19 MS. GOODRIDGE: I --

20 CHAIRMAN REISS: -- try to
21 finalize this.

22 MS. GOODRIDGE: -- yeah, I
23 certainly wasn't trying to do that.

24 CHAIRMAN REISS: No, I understand.
25 I mean, we're just trying to make the best of a

1

2 difficult situation. I just don't want to come up
3 with a process where some people are favored and
4 others aren't. I'm just trying to think on the
5 fly.

6

MS. GOODRIDGE: And I understand
7 that. Do we have a sense of how many registered
8 speakers there are remaining?

9

MS. BURGER: I think what I'm
10 going to do is, I'm going to call out some names of
11 people from -- that said they were going to phone
12 in. And if you hear your name, if you could please
13 phone in with the number that was used to register
14 you and we will open you.

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: All right.

16

Leah, I'm going to try to give an
17 estimate of how many registered speakers remain.

18

MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay.

19

CHAIRMAN REISS: Unless -- unless
20 Brian or Danielle could do it more rapidly.

21

MS. BURGER: Well, I just want to
22 read out some of these names.

23

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sure.

24

MS. BURGER: Just for the people
25 watching, if you sign in on video with these names,

1

2 we're not taking you. You need to call in from the
3 phone number that you registered with.

4

Kate Yale;

5

Joseph Veltri;

6

Luigi Arlia;

7

Laura Govan;

8

Rogelio Vivar;

9

Amador and Anna Nehia;

10

Yvette Hernandez;

11

John T. Mayner;

12

Luis Jorzo;

13

14 MS. GOODRIDGE: Danielle, can you
15 slow down so that we can write like the people who
16 are listening on so that we can help support by
17 calling these folks and making sure that they go
18 back on.

18

I got lost after Yvette Hernandez.

19

20 MS. BURGER: Okay. You've got up
21 to Yvette Hernandez.

21

MS. GOODRIDGE: Correct.

22

MS. BURGER: John T. Mayner;

23

Luis Jorzo;

24

Shanty McGee;

25

Francisco Ascero;

1

2

Alvin Doyle.

3

And that's everyone.

4

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Danielle, Laura

5

Govan -- Govan already spoke.

6

MS. BURGER: She did.

7

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yes.

8

MS. BURGER: Sorry.

9

MS. GARCIA: And I texted you a

10 name of someone who's already on the waiting room

11 waiting who we skipped earlier. So you can call

12 her in if you want or wait to grab more speakers.

13

MS. BURGER: Okay. Hold on just a

14

minute.

15

Her last name starts with an R,

16

Sheila?

17

MS. GARCIA: That's correct,

18

Danielle. Sorry, I didn't unmute myself.

19

MS. BURGER: I do not see her on

20 the phone list. There's nobody from that area code

21

on the phone list.

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: Leah, to get back

23

to your question, I think there's about between 20

24

and 25 people on the list that we haven't gotten to

25

yet.

1

2 MS. GOODRIDGE: Oh, wow. Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN REISS: But some of
4 those people may be no shows. So, Leah, that's
5 just the uncrossed out names on the spreadsheet as
6 far as I could tell.

7 MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay. Got it.

8 MS. BURGER: I will ask any one of
9 the speakers, I just gave your phone number -- I
10 mean, I just gave your name. If you're calling in
11 on the phone, if you could raise your hand by
12 pressing star 9 after you get in.

13 For the people on video who had
14 their hands raised, we are not hearing from you
15 unless you're a registered speaker. And I don't
16 see that any of you are registered speakers.

17 Is there any other registered
18 speakers on video? You can feel free to raise your
19 hand. But we will be checking very carefully and
20 we're not going to take anybody whose name doesn't
21 match or whose phone number doesn't match.

22 If you signed into this webinar
23 with just one name and you registered to speak, you
24 need to leave and come back in with your full name.

25 Okay. I'm just going to check

1

2 some of these phone numbers. I think we have Kate
3 Yale.

4

5

MS. YALE: Hello. Can you hear
me?

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, we can.

7

MS. YALE: Oh, great.

8

Okay. Thank you.

9

My name is Kate Yale. My husband
10 and I have owned a building with 20 two and
11 three-bedroom apartments for 35 years. Over that
12 time ten of the units have become free market.

13

Politicians describe this as a
14 loss of stabilized housing. Actually, the opposite
15 is true. These ten units saved the building and
16 support all of the families in it. Our average
17 rent stabilized rent is \$850 for three bedrooms and
18 it only covers half of the operating cost.

19

The 47 percent tax increase over
20 the last six years has put our average property tax
21 bill for each apartment at \$750 a month. Water and
22 sewer is an additional \$100 a month. So the entire
23 income for the ten stabilized units is taken by the
24 City for taxes and water and sewer. They pay the
25 same amount for the free market apartments.

1

2

3

4

5

Our actual operating costs for each apartment is \$1,550 a month. So we lose \$700 each month on each of the ten apartments, well over \$80,000 a year.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

How did this happen? Under rent stabilization there's no connection between the value of an apartment and its rent. The reason is simple. Over the 50-year period these people have lived in their apartments, and I know and like them all, the guidelines were too low to keep up with rising expenses and we never got a vacancy increase for them.

14

15

16

17

This leaves us in a perilous position. Because we have to contribute our own income and the income of other tenants to keep the building afloat.

18

19

20

21

22

Proposing a zero percent increase is unconscionable. It is unjust to every one of the families we house in our building because it leaves no leeway to cover expenses to pay for a furnace, to replace the roof, to do repairs.

23

24

25

Banks won't lend to small owners. These draconian regulations are ruining the only true affordable housing in New York. We need at

1

2 least a five percent increase this year and

3 seven-and-a-half percent over two years.

4

Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
your testimony.

7

8 MS. GARCIA: Maybe an important --
9 David, Ramona Montenegro -- we were having a lot of
10 difficult getting on, is no longer going to
testify.

11

12 Rogelio, we haven't been able to
13 communicate with. So I don't know if he's
testifying.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Who was the
second name? I'm sorry, what was the second name?

16

MS. GARCIA: Maybe he'll be back.

17

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

18

19 MS. GARCIA: And then this other
20 person is Malor Mejia (phonetic). We don't -- we
haven't been able to communicate with them -- so.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

22

23 Danielle and Brian, did you get
that -- or identify them as probably no shows.

24

25 MS. BURGER: I did. And I'm
looking for phone numbers so I wasn't paying

1

2 attention.

3

4 names.

5

MS. BURGER: Okay.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Great.

7

8 MS. BURGER: I'm not seeing any of
9 these people that called out for the phone. If I
10 called out your name, if you can raise your hand if
11 you're on the phone. I'll check again.

12 If you are not calling from the
13 phone, if you did not hear your name, please put
14 your hand down.

15 Should we -- should we maybe take
16 a ten minute break while we see if we can find --

17 CHAIRMAN REISS: Sure. Let's
18 take a ten-minute break.

19 MS. GARCIA: I'm sorry. There are
20 some folks who are on there waiting -- so.

21 MS. BURGER: I don't see them
22 though.

23 MS. GARCIA: The phone numbers I
24 just sent you.

25 MS. BURGER: I thought you sent me
phone numbers of people who weren't speaking.

1

2 Sorry.

3

MS. GARCIA: No, no. I sent
4 you -- it starts with an S, the first name.

5

MS. BURGER: Okay. Yes. Hold on
6 a second.

7

MS. GARCIA: She should be on the
8 line already.

9

MS. BURGER: Okay. Hold on a
10 second.

11

Sandra, you're on the phone. You
12 can give your testimony.

13

MS. MITCHELL: Yes, I am here.
14 Can you hear me?

15

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes. Welcome.

16

MS. MITCHELL: Thank you.

17

Thank you so very much.

18

I was having some technical
19 problems. So I probably died.

20

My name is Sandra Mitchell. And I
21 am a CASA leader. And I'd like to testify about
22 the need for the freeze of rent because of the
23 COVID, especially and, also, because there are ways
24 that landlords can get grants to fix buildings and,
25 also, to get tax writeoffs when we're in a crisis

1

2 like we are.

3

4 I joined CASA maybe, I don't know,
5 maybe some eight years now or nine years when I was
6 in the shelter. And I didn't understand anything
7 about evictions or cancel rent or anything. And so
8 I wanted to know what life could be like by
9 understanding both the -- both sides of the
10 landlords and, also, myself as a tenant.

11

12 I've always worked and I was
13 always able to pay my rent. And then when I had an
14 accident that hurt my neck and my back and I could
15 barely walk, that's when I lost my apartment.

16

17 Again, you know, CASA has really
18 been a life line for me for me to understand how
19 sometimes people fall down on their luck and there
20 are supports there.

21

22 I do understand it from a
23 landlord's point of view. I'm renting a home
24 myself.

25

26 What I really want to put out
27 there is that because of the COVID virus, the
28 pandemic that we're all in, we're all hurting and
29 no one needs to be evicted because there are Zoom
30 (inaudible) that are out there.

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Again, I will say to freeze the rent and not make additional -- additional -- additional problems with the tenants because we want to stay where we are. We can work it out. We can work out payment plans or what have you and then there are special supports that are out there for building owners and homeowners.

And I guess that's really all I want to say. We can work this out. We can work it together. No one needs to be evicted or whatever. Let's put some support in for both sides, for the landlord, as well as the tenant. And we just need some time in order to get back on our feet.

And that's my testimony.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for your testimony.

MS. MITCHELL: Thank you.

MS. GARCIA: Danielle, there's someone else who has their hands up. Their first name starts with an S. They've been waiting for awhile.

MS. BURGER: I don't know who that is though. I'll see if anybody with that first name is registered. There's nobody with that first

1

2 name registered.

3

I can't hear you, Sheila.

4

5 shorter version of that name? I texted you the
6 name.

7

8 MS. BURGER: Yeah. I texted you
back. She didn't register to speak.

9

10 I guess at this point, I'll just
again ask if you know that you registered to speak,
11 please raise your hand. If you're doing it on the
12 phone, please press star 9.

13

All right.

14

15 I think we're going to have to
take a break. I'm not sure that we have anybody
16 left that we're going to be able to hear from.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REISS: So just to
understand, Danielle, you're saying that every one
19 who's raising their hand is not a registered
20 speaker either by their name or by their phone
21 number; is that -- is that what you're saying?

22

23 MS. BURGER: I just saw somebody
who was. She had her hand up. It's not up anymore.
24 Her name starts with a J. The last name starts
25 with an R. You just had your hand up. I see her

1

2 here. I'm going to --

3

MS. GARCIA: She's a Spanish
4 speaker. So just make sure that someone is
5 supporting you to communicate with her.

6

MS. BURGER: Okay.

7

Juanita -- Juanita, we'd like to
8 hear from you.

9

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: She already
11 spoke.

12

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: I'm sorry.

14

I'm sorry. Excuse me. Have you
15 testified yet tonight?

16

MS. BURGER: I just -- if
17 somebody, if one of the staff people could help me
18 keep up with the list. Because I'm obviously
19 missing things in all this chaos.

20

CHAIRMAN REISS: Danielle, I think
21 obviously you need a little bit of time because of
22 the chaos. Let me just have a conversation with
23 the board members.

24

We are mandated to be here until
25 9:00 because that's what we noticed the meeting

1

2 for. I personally don't think that opening this up
3 to unregistered speakers is a good move given our
4 experience tonight.

5

Do others have views on that?

6

MR. SCHWARTZ: I agree.

7

CHAIRMAN REISS: Anybody disagree.

8

MS. BURGER: I do have one

9

registered speaker from the phone.

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila --

11

All right.

12

Danielle, just hold off one

13

second.

14

Sheila, we can't hear you.

15

MS. GARCIA: Sorry. I didn't want

16

to talk over Danielle.

17

I just feel like, you know, we

18

have the time therefore we should make the

19

accommodations to see if we can hear from speakers.

20

There's other organizations who

21

didn't get to register folks or they didn't sign up

22

ahead of time that we can reach out to and see if

23

there are any speakers who are on the line and get

24

their phone number and their names, like I was

25

doing the whole hearing. We can try to see if

1

2 there are additional folks we can include.

3

4 A shorter thing is too much to do.
5 it doesn't feel like the right thing to do for me.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah, for me it's
8 not a too much to do thing, it's a -- it's the
9 repeated Zoom bombing and then the other issue, and
10 I'm just kind of -- I'm just kind of trying to
11 think this through on the fly, the other issue is
12 that if only people that can come in through you
13 and Leah are allowed in, I'm not sure that that
14 seems to fair to people who aren't coming through
15 you and Leah.

16

17 So it's like kind of like not
18 having open access to everybody. So personally, I
19 would say let's have a rule that kind of applies to
20 everyone who's trying to speak. That's kind of
21 my -- my take on it.

22

23 MR. GONZALEZ-RIVERA: For
24 instance, are there any -- is there any way for
25 people who want to speak to be able to e-mail
26 someone on the RGB board and put themselves on the
27 list?

28

29 CHAIRMAN REISS: You know,
30 Christian, we think that the spoofer has done that

1

2 exact same thing. It looks like the spoofer
3 created a fake e-mail address and a variation of
4 the name of somebody who had been posted on the
5 screen. So that's not a fool proof.

6 MR. GONZALEZ-RIVERA: I see.

7 MS. GARCIA: It just feels like the
8 argument I'm saying we'll have no speakers because
9 some people will be able to speak and other people
10 might not have access? It's the same thing that
11 we're saying about why we should have hearings;
12 right? We shouldn't have a hearing because not
13 everybody will have access. And this is like chaos
14 that sort of resulted from it.

15 You know, because we're doing it
16 digitally and so I do feel like we should make the
17 extra -- I'm happy to take the extra steps that
18 I've already been taking in supporting mono lingual
19 Spanish speakers and, also, making sure we get our
20 folks on the calls.

21 I called -- we called every single
22 person who testified to make sure they got on. And
23 so if organizations are able to do that, we'll
24 e-mail the whole coalition, which is over 30
25 organizations that see those e-mails and then those

1

2 folks' names, I'm happy to coordinate that to
3 happen. And if they don't, we'll end the night.
4 But it just feels like a little bit problematic,
5 you know, to say, it's hard - and, also, you know,
6 some people might not.

7 You know, there are millions of
8 rent stabilized tenants who don't know this hearing
9 is happening right now. Therefore, that logic
10 means we shouldn't have a hearing.

11 CHAIRMAN REISS: No, no --

12 MS. GOODRIDGE: I just want to also
13 say that, you know, in -- also, just to back up
14 Sheila and, also, to say that in light of the fact
15 that we had, you know, some racist clown come on
16 here and make offensive statements, like we should
17 try to be even more accommodating and not them ruin
18 our process and say, you know, now we have to
19 double down and less people might be able to
20 testify. Because that's probably what they want
21 and we shouldn't acquiesce to that.

22 And, you know, I understand, we
23 see that we're all trying to do -- and David, just
24 to commend you, you've done a great job. But I'm
25 just saying that for tonight, I know that it's a

1

2 little bit hectic and you and Andrew are doing the
3 best that you can but we also want to make sure
4 that we don't let someone, you know, ruin the
5 process and make it more difficult. Because that's
6 probably what they want.

7

I don't know how we can go about
8 that. But, however, we can -- Sheila and I are
9 more than happy to support you in those efforts.

10

MR. GONZALEZ-RIVERA: Okay. You
11 know, given that, I mean we have posted until 9:00
12 and I mean we're not going to sit here just
13 twiddling our thumbs until 9:00.

14

If, I mean, Leah and Sheila
15 already have a process, you know, to get people on.
16 Let's give them a good faith -- I mean, let's give
17 them five minutes to organize themselves and get
18 another roster up.

19

We do have other ways of
20 submitting testimony, either written, et cetera.
21 And so I mean, I would just ask, if there's anybody
22 out there who is not in Sheila and Leah's list who
23 would like to submit testimony, would it be
24 possible for them to submit written testimony and
25 then we'd read it. Because, I mean, I definitely

1

2 see, it's like we don't want to give another
3 opening to persons who want to say the things that
4 they did, but at the same time, I mean, it's I feel
5 like Leah and Sheila are already working on a
6 process.

7 So -- and we do have to be here
8 until 9:00. So why don't we take five minutes.
9 Take a break and give them an opportunity to create
10 a roster.

11 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: There is also
12 -- we received over 40 oral and video testimonies
13 that we can also share if the process is being
14 weighed down and we can certainly play those for
15 not only the board members but all of the public to
16 listen to as well. Those are testimonies as though
17 they were here. So that's an option as well.

18 MS. DE ROSE: Andrew, were those
19 e-mailed to us already?

20 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: No, it's not
21 all. We had another group and there's a lot that
22 we had another 20 or so, I believe and we were
23 going -- we were preparing for you guys to send
24 around tomorrow with a link. So it is a different
25 sent.

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2

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5

MS. BURGER: Well, I do have one speaker on the phone and I was told that Juanita actually didn't get to speak because of some technical issues.

6

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay.

7

8

MS. BURGER: We have two people we can speak to.

9

10

11

12

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: And, Danielle, just procedurally how are you feeling just in terms of juggling the technical stuff. Are you in a good place or are you not yet in a good place? Do you need time?

14

15

16

MS. BURGER: I don't know if time is going to help or not. But, yeah, I don't know that time is going to help.

17

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

18

19

MS. BURGER: Let's just get these two speakers and let's hear from them.

20

21

22

23

24

25

CHAIRMAN REISS: So this is my recommendation but I'm happy for people to disagree. I would recommend that we hear from these two speakers that Sheila and Leah, if they can coordinate other people to speak that we do. And then that we open it up, if there's time after

1

2 9:00, we open it up to others and if it turns out
3 to be spoofing and Zoom bombing, then maybe we just
4 -- we shut it down at that point.

5

That's my proposal.

6

MS. DE ROSE: Yeah, I think we
7 take a risk to hear from the general -- the whole
8 public. And give that opportunity for those that
9 are not organized to also speak. I think that's
10 important and, you know, it's a risk but I think
11 it's important to hear from as many people and give
12 as many people the opportunity to speak.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. Is that a
14 plan then? Do we have a plan?

15

Okay. Fine. So let's start with
16 the two people we have and then we'll go from
17 there.

18

MS. BURGER: Okay. We have Alvin
19 Doyle on the line.

20

MR. DOYLE: Hi.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

22

MR. DOYLE: My name is Alvin
23 Doyle. And I live in Stuyvesant Town. I am now a
24 senior citizen and I am very proud to live in this
25 community my entire life.

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Over the many years, Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village have been hit with many, many MCIs and vacant apartments have been hit with individual apartment increases.

Our rent some years seemed to multiply. Now signs of distress are rampant in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village due to the Corona Virus and the lockdown on many workers, resulting from this pandemic.

Vacancies in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village have increased greatly and as we move forward, we are afraid that we will see many more vacancies.

We need a rent rollback in the face of this situation, a rent rollback would be a good asset to many New York City residents.

That's my testimony and I thank you for your board's persistence.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

MS. BURGER: We have Juanita Rodriguez.

CHAIRMAN REISS: Welcome.

MS. BURGER: Can someone possibly

1

2 Zoom inaudible).

3

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

4

Spanish.

5

MS. BURGER: You're muted.

6

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaking Spanish.

7

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

8

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaking Spanish.

9

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

10

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaking Spanish.

11

(Spanish Translation)

12

MS. RODRIGUEZ: "My name is Juanita

13

Rodríguez and I live at 15-15 Selwyn Avenue, Apt.

14

ST1 and I am a member of CASA. I am here to testify

15

that a landlord like ours, Abdul Khan, should not

16

be rewarded.

17

I live in an apartment riddled

18

with leaks. One of the rooms is closed off and

19

there is a leak in my kitchen. My bedroom is near

20

the area where garbage is collected for all

21

forty-seven apartments. And in seven years, I have

22

never been able to open my windows. I've had to

23

deal with infestations involving roaches, vermin,

24

and flies. This landlord completely disregards the

25

law and never complies with anyone, not even court

1
2 orders. He doesn't even follow NY laws. This is why
3 I believe he shouldn't be rewarded for mistreating
4 us the way he does. He also wants to evict many
5 people from the building for various reasons
6 because he only cares about making money. He
7 doesn't care about making repairs in the building
8 so that we live the way we're meant to. Many
9 people's windows are damaged, they have rats and
10 roaches in their homes, and they have no heat. All
11 of these things are happening in this building. I
12 don't believe he should be rewarded. This is
13 against the law. If any politician is listening,
14 please do something because I'm living in subhuman
15 conditions. No one should be living the way I am.

16 Thank you!"

17 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
18 your testimony.

19 MS. BURGER: At this point, I'm
20 not sure that we're able to recognize any
21 registered speakers. I'm going to say one last
22 time, if you registered to speak, please raise your
23 hand. If you're on the telephone, that's star 9.

24 If you already spoke, please put
25 your hand down.

1

2 THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

3 Spanish.

4 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. So just to

5 be clear, I think for all of us, we had a list of

6 registered speakers. We've called all those people

7 that we've identified if they properly registered

8 by using the same name that they registered.

9 So we are done with our registered

10 speakers.

11 Sheila and Leah, do you have other

12 either registered speakers that you're aware of or

13 unregistered speakers?

14 MS. GARCIA: We're still working

15 on it. It hasn't even -- like we haven't been

16 able, like I just sent the e-mail out right

17 after -- the first person spoke.

18 CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah.

19 MS. GOODRIDGE: Danielle, one of

20 the e-mails that I e-mailed like ten minutes ago,

21 that person still would like to speak, that was not

22 registered.

23 MS. BURGER: Okay.

24 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I do have -- I

25 do have a speaker here.

1

2

MS. GOODRIDGE: Oh, okay.

3

4

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, which I'm going to promote to talk.

5

MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay. Great.

6

Thank you very much.

7

8

MS. MC LAUGHLIN: It's Altagracia Rodriguez. She asked for Spanish translation.

9

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I'm right here.

10

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

11

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

12

(Spanish Translation)

13

14

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25

MS. RODRIGUEZ: "My name is Altagracia Rodríguez. I live at 1485 Macombs Road. I've been living here for over twenty years and our landlord has been the worst thing to ever happen to us. This gentleman makes no repairs. My apartment is falling apart. The kitchen ceiling is caving in. The entrance door to my apartment is damaged. We could potentially be locked out and then have to call a locksmith. The windows are also damaged. Additionally, the kitchen sink is rotting. We're tired of asking him to make repairs. He doesn't listen to any of our requests.

The other issue I'm experiencing

1
2 is that he alleges I owe him back rent from
3 September of last year. He sent me letters
4 threatening to evict me on May 17th, which was a
5 Sunday. He then said he would evict me on a later
6 date, which happened to be a Saturday. I wrote him
7 a letter and asked why this was happening. He
8 continues to charge me for back rent from September
9 of last year. I have all the proof because I pay
10 via check. I have everything in order because I
11 know he'll take me to court. However, he will lose
12 because I have all the proof. I'm just waiting for
13 that day. Another thing, the tenants of this
14 building do not feel secure. This is because of the
15 main entrance door to the building. He even cuts
16 off our cold and hot water and doesn't even warn us
17 that he'll be doing so. When you're showering or
18 cooking, you're left with no running water. The
19 building's maintenance is deplorable. It's
20 horrible. He doesn't clean the building. It smells
21 everywhere. My home is filled with vermin. I have
22 to buy rat and roach poison to kill them off."

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
24 your testimony.

25 Andrew, so are we done with the

1

2 registered that we -- we've run through our list
3 and there's no one else remaining; right?

4

MS. BURGER: That we think that
5 we know of.

6

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: In terms of
7 those, of the names we haven't read out that didn't
8 have a phone number associated, we don't have any
9 more of those folks. She was an example of someone
10 who had registered without a phone number with a
11 video. So were able to identify her because her
12 name hadn't been made public.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

14

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: So we still
15 have some of those on the list. We'll keep looking
16 for them but there's very -- there's not many left
17 of those.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila, is there
19 a sense, I think you may have said this already but
20 is your sense that everyone who identified CASA as
21 their affiliation who wants to speak has had that
22 opportunity?

23

MS. GARCIA: Correct. I have --
24 we do --

25

CHAIRMAN REISS: You're muted.

1

2

MS. GARCIA: Oh.

3

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: No, she's not.

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: She's not.

5

MS. GOODRIDGE: I can hear her.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: I thought she

7

was.

8

Sorry, Sheila.

9

MS. GOODRIDGE: I can hear her.

10

MS. GARCIA: Can folks hear me?

11

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah.

12

MS. GARCIA: Okay.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: I can't hear her.

14

So Andrew, you'll have to talk

15

with her because I can't hear her.

16

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: You can't hear

17

her? What --

18

MS. GARCIA: Selective listening.

19

(Laughter.)

20

MS. GARCIA: From your computer.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: My wife would

22

like to have that channel.

23

MS. GARCIA: Everyone who had

24

registered to testify who we knew was going to

25

testify from the organization ahead of time, has

1

2 already testified. There were four people who we
3 could not communicate with -- three people. And
4 they -- I'm assuming they're not going to testify.

5

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay.

6

MS. GARCIA: I sent Danielle some
7 numbers and names of folks who were watching and
8 want to testify who I hope will call in. I sent
9 them the first name and the last name of at least
10 three additional folks and then there was some
11 mention by Leah earlier from other organizations.
12 Those are also have been sent to you all.

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

14

MS. BURGER: Okay. So I have two
15 names from Leah and Sheila, the -- the name that
16 you gave me that starts with an S, are you
17 confident that the person with their hand raised is
18 that person?

19

(No response.)

20

MS. BURGER: I can't hear you
21 Sheila.

22

MS. GARCIA: I'm as confident as I
23 can be since they e-mailed my work e-mail. So if
24 it's a spoofer they have to do a lot of research.

25

(Laughter.)

1

2

MS. BURGER: Okay. But.

3

All right.

4

Do we want to take a chance?

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yeah, take the

6

chance. It's not a big deal.

7

MS. BURGER: All right.

8

Is this Susie Shrop?

9

(No response.)

10

MS. BURGER: Is this Susie Shrop?

11

MS. SHROP: Yes, this is Susie

12

Shrop and I'm not a spoofer.

13

(Laughter.)

14

MS. GOODRIDGE: I was ready to

15

shout out Black Lives Matter.

16

(Laughter.)

17

MS. SHROP: No, no, nothing like

18

that. Nothing like.

19

MS. GOODRIDGE: I muted myself and

20

all.

21

MS. SHROP: And I tried to give as

22

many credentials as possible.

23

So my testimony, here it goes.

24

Dear members of the Rent

25

Guidelines Board, my name is Susie Shrop and I've

1

2 been a rent stabilized tenant for 30 years.

3

4 I work in the creative industry
5 which brings enough income to live in a rent
6 stabilized apartment but never market rate.

7

8 Since March 2020, I've lost 73
9 percent of my work. And the future is uncertain at
10 best.

11

12 I empathize with the small
13 business owners and hear their struggles. I
14 believe they should be receiving financial aid.
15 However, for tenants the situation is much, much
16 worse.

17

18 In my case, the owners are the
19 notorious Shalom family, a predatory landlord
20 family that owns 140 buildings in Manhattan. They
21 buy rent stabilized buildings, empty them of the
22 tenants and turn them into market rate apartments.

23

24 Our building consists of 90
25 percent market rate units and this is not a
26 landlord that's hurting. They use their massive
27 profits to raise -- to now raise six to eight unit
28 buildings and to replace them with buildings like
29 20 plus units luxury housing. There's a case
30 before the courts right now.

1
2 As I said so far, I've lost 73
3 percent of my income and I'm struggling. Since I
4 started testifying before the Rent Guidelines Board
5 over 20 years ago, we have not seen any signs of
6 the mass sales and exodus of building owners.
7 We're seen mass evictions and increased rent
8 burdens for tenants. New York real estate is
9 booming in the most lucrative industry in the
10 State.

11 COVID has been a disaster of
12 unimaginable magnitude for tenants like me. Market
13 watcher are already predicting mass evictions and
14 RENY is already coaching their members and
15 preparing eviction documents come August 21st. I
16 heard that from tenant attorneys.

17 We need a rent rollback now and if
18 not now, when? Like how much more of a disaster do
19 we need?

20 Thank you very much.

21 And I appreciate you taking my
22 unannounced testimony.

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
24 your testimony.

25 MS. BURGER: We have Ignacio Diaz

1

2 on the phone. I think he has two devices on.
3 He's going to need to silence one of them as we're
4 getting an echo.

5

Ignacio?

6

MR. DIAZ: Yes, hello.

7

8

Good afternoon. How's everybody
doing?

9

CHAIRMAN REISS: Good.

10

Thank you.

11

12

MR. DIAZ: My name's -- good
evening RGB Council.

13

14

15

16

My name's Ignacio Diaz. I am an
American -- I am a disabled American citizen living
on a fixed income. Fifty-five percent of my income
goes to rent.

17

18

19

20

21

In times like this and under
these circumstances, it is unfair to raise rents
knowing -- knowing there's no income coming in and
people are overwhelmed with inflation crisis not
knowing if they can sustain a family of five.

22

23

In the past ten years the rent in
rent controlled apartments has gone up 25 percent.

24

25

Please do the right thing and
cancel rent and please do not allow a rent increase

1

2 in this COVID-19 crisis and at least 24 months
3 after that.

4

The median head of household
5 averages \$2,500 monthly and 53 percent goes to rent
6 or, like it was said at yesterday's meeting,
7 property taxes. It's demoralizing, I say.

8

No rent increase for the citizens
9 of the United States and a rollback, please.

10

And before I leave, I would like
11 to give Ms. Kim kudos a shout out. And whose Bronx
12 is this? And how are we fighting for? Our
13 citizens and our residents.

14

Please do the right thing.

15

It's in your hands.

16

God bless and have a good evening.

17

MS. GARCIA: Thank you, Ignacio.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for

19

your testimony.

20

MS. BURGER: I think we're going

21

to try Dorca -- Dorca, are you there? Can you
22 unmute yourself?

23

THE INTERPRETER: Speaking

24

Spanish.

25

DORCA: Can you hear me?

1

2

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

3

Although there's feedback.

4

5

DORCA: Okay. Can you hear me better now? I'm so sorry.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. Hi.

7

Thank you for allowing me to join

8

in.

9

My name is Dorca Reynos. And I

10

live a 78 Bayer Street. I've lived here for the

11

last 23 years.

12

I'm calling to ask you for a rent

13

rollback. I hear all the stories from the

14

landlords talking about how they're burdened when

15

we all know they're making 39.5 cents per dollar

16

while people are struggling.

17

People of color in this City pay

18

upwards of 50 percent of their income in rent. I

19

mean, seriously, how can they complain about maybe

20

losing a few percentages in dollars.

21

The role of the Rent Guidelines

22

Board is not to actually be there -- to

23

responsibility is not to safeguard exorbitant gains

24

and profits for the landlords, they're to protect

25

the people.

1
2 There's going to be so many
3 homeless people. So many will lose their home. In
4 my building alone, I've seen apartments here being
5 warehoused for over 15 years. There's no way that
6 this is not the only landlord that does it in the
7 City. It's something commonly done. They're
8 holding back these apartments that are rent
9 stabilized so they can flip them and turn them into
10 market rent and they cheat the laws. They play
11 games with the laws so they can keep more people
12 out and raise the rents. It is illegal. It's
13 horrible. It's deplorable.

14 How can they sit there and talk
15 about how they're burdened. Burdened by what?
16 Because they're going to lose a couple of
17 percentages on the money that they're earning when
18 people are going hungry. It's a shame. Shame on
19 you.

20 Do the right thing, Rent Board,
21 please. Do the right thing for the people.

22 Thank you for listening to me.

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
24 your testimony.

25 MS. BURGER: We have Maria Diallo

1

2 on the line.

3

4

MS. DIALLO: Yeah. Hi. Good evening.

5

My name is Maria Diallo.

6

7

I'm joining the meeting because I need to testify to.

8

9

10

11

12

13

I'm supporting for the rent to hold back because it is not fair for middle class or people who don't have a voice or anyone like people of color or, you know, men who don't have benefits to increase the rent with this pandemic moment. It's not right.

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

We plead the Governor to think about and think to do the right thing. And they should not even allow to increase the rents. Even we are -- we've been going to Rent Council and now it's going to be the rent increase. How are we going to be surviving with those increases. He should think before he accept any of these -- these offer for the landlords. He shouldn't accept that. He should think about the poor people.

23

That's what I have to say.

24

We plead him. We need him now.

25

He has the power to make everything right.

1

2 So please, do the right hand.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
5 your testimony.6 MS. BURGER: I need just a
7 minute.8 The next speaker that I have lined
9 up just left.10 Sheila, some of these people are
11 not -- most of these people are not here, Sheila.12 MS. GARCIA: I know that some of
13 these organizers who sent me names are on
14 listening. So if you did send me a name, please
15 make sure your speakers are on the Zoom number.16 All the information on the website
17 for the RGB on what numbers you should call in
18 order to give testimonies. So please support by
19 doing that or only send me numbers when the person
20 is on the actual Zoom call so that we don't have to
21 have the lag.22 MS. BURGER: Harper was on. She
23 left just before I was going to allow her to speak.24 I did not look for the other two
25 in advance but they're not here.

1

2

MS. GARCIA: Emanuel. I see --

3

here are some names -- some folks I recognize. If

4

you are actually a person, we are not going to take

5

random speakers. You would have to get verified

6

either by e-mailing me or texting me. If you don't

7

have my phone number, you're going to have to text

8

an organizer I know in order for me to verify who

9

you are.

10

So there's like Emanuel. I see

11

Arlene Green. There's some other names that seem

12

folks might be interested in testifying. You have

13

to get verified before you can testify.

14

MR. SCHWARTZ: I have to go.

15

I just wanted to thank everyone,

16

especially Danielle for keeping this going. It's

17

been unbelievably challenging.

18

Thank you.

19

I guess we need to rethink the use

20

of Zoom for public meetings like this, clearly.

21

Maybe using passwords but that's a topic for

22

another discussion.

23

But anyway, sorry that I have to

24

go.

25

But thank you.

1

2

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you, Alex.

3

4

MS. BURGER: I have -- I think I
have Barbara.

5

6

MS. GARCIA: I think so too. I
just saw her number come up.

7

8

MS. BURGER: Okay. So we have
Barbara Williamson.

9

Barbara, go ahead.

10

11

MS. WILLIAMSON: Good evening.

Can you hear me?

12

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, we can.

Please continue.

14

Thank you.

15

16

MS. WILLIAMSON: Good evening
everyone.

17

My name is Barbara Williamson.

18

19

I'm the president of the tenants association at
1380 University Avenue in the Bronx.

20

21

I've been a CASA member for nine
years and this has been going on for so long it's

22

like a broken record. You know, the landlords

23

they complain. They've been complaining for years,

24

they don't get enough and they need an increase.

25

The Rent Guidelines Board, they

1

2 should realize, you know, it's impossible for
3 people to pay at this time. We got COVID-19.
4 Thousands and thousands of people, if not millions
5 have been fired or laid off and don't have jobs.

6 Even after the August 20th, if
7 people do look for jobs, they'd be lucky enough to
8 find something that they're qualified to do. It's
9 going to take them time to get on their feet.
10 People are not going to be able to pay rent. Then
11 once you put those tenants out, who are you going
12 to find to pay this rent since everybody is out of
13 work?

14 That's all I have to say.

15 Please, we need a rollback and we
16 don't need any excuses. I'm on a fixed income.
17 I'm a senior citizen. I pay more than 30 percent
18 of my rent. And if weren't for the the few dollars
19 from my kids and helping me out, I'd be in trouble.
20 I barely have enough to buy toiletries. That's no
21 way to live and I worked over 30 years and I'm
22 retired. I'm 70 years old. But I have to get my
23 health together so I can go back to work and pay
24 rent. It's ridiculous.

25 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for

1

2 your testimony.

3

4 is not low income.

5

Please give us a rollback.

6

Thank you.

7

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

8

Thank you for your testimony.

9

10 MS. BURGER: At this time, I do
11 not see any of the other people that I see the
12 numbers for.

12

CHAIRMAN REISS: So we are now at

13

14 9:03. So we need to figure out how we want to move
15 forward.

15

MR. WALSH: We have a quorum;

16

17 right? I could stay a little bit longer but I
18 do have something I need to go to in about ten
19 minutes --

19

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

20

MR. WALSH: -- to prepare for

21

something tomorrow.

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila and Leah,

23

24 do you have any thoughts about how to proceed now
25 that it's 9:00?

25

MS. GARCIA: Yes. If you can give

1
2 us a second so that we can reach out to the folks
3 who sent us names to verify why their folks are not
4 on there, just to make sure they have the correct
5 information.

6 MS. BURGER: The name that you
7 gave me that has an area code I don't recognize.
8 There's somebody with that area code on but the
9 last numbers don't match.

10 MS. GARCIA: Can you text me the
11 area code or the person so that I can verify that
12 it might be the same person.

13 MS. BURGER: Sarah at 860.

14 MS. GOODRIDGE: Is the last digit
15 4?

16 MS. BURGER: The last digit that
17 is signed in is 4. It's not the last digit I was
18 given.

19 MS. GOODRIDGE: That is her
20 number then.

21 MS. BURGER: Okay. For Sarah?

22 MS. GOODRIDGE: Yeah.

23 MS. BURGER: Okay.

24 Thank you.

25 We have Sarah McDaniel-Dyer on the

1

2 line.

3

MS. MC DANIEL-DYER: Hi. I'm a
4 tenant organizer in Inwood. My landlord's name is
5 Louis Barbanel and he owns 33 buildings in our
6 neighborhood. And I know he's spoken before the
7 Rent Guidelines Board and said that he needs rent
8 increases to maintain his properties.

9

But we formed a tenant union of 19
10 of his buildings because he's not maintaining those
11 properties currently. So I don't know why raising
12 our rents is going to help.

13

When the pandemic started, our
14 union started calling our fellow neighbors to see
15 how they were affected and many of them are
16 essential workers and they're trying to survive
17 having COVID. A lot of people lost their sources
18 of income and most of them hadn't even heard from
19 our landlord that he was offering a ten percent
20 rent reduction. But when we talked to people, they
21 told us they could, even with that ten percent rent
22 reduction, they could still only maybe pay through
23 June.

24

And all of them were worried about
25 finding food and they're all choosing to put the

1

2 little money they have towards rent rather than
3 buying food. And is that the kind of City we want
4 to be where we ask sick nurses to pay rent rather
5 than buy food?

6 You know, we were rent burdened
7 before COVID started and now everything is worse.

8 I don't think it's fair for
9 property owners during a pandemic to put their
10 hands out and say, not only should we be getting
11 the same as we were getting when so many people
12 have lost income and lost their jobs and lost their
13 lives but we want more on top of that.

14 You know, these people weren't
15 maintaining these buildings beforehand and we have
16 institutions in place in the City that will help
17 small landlords if they really need help if they
18 open their books. So I don't understand why small
19 landlords don't do that.

20 We don't need to help my landlord
21 who owns 33 buildings in northern Manhattan alone.
22 He has enough money.

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
24 your testimony.

25 MS. MC DANIEL-DYER: Thank you.

1

2 CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila, Leah,
3 thoughts?

4 MS. GARCIA: All right.

5 I can't see who is doing what so I
6 sent Danielle -- I'm texting Danielle the numbers
7 and she's letting me know if they've been verified
8 or not. So I kind of am at the -- and if Danielle
9 says there's no one on the thing then I don't know
10 what else I can do other than like ask folks who
11 are having a lot of debt difficulties, you know,
12 some folks are on the Zoom thing but they can't
13 testify from there so they have to hang up and call
14 back --

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

16 MS. GARCIA: -- and that is taking
17 some time and we have to get all that information
18 to them -- so.

19 CHAIRMAN REISS: All right.

20 Any thoughts from any other board
21 members about how you'd like to proceed now that
22 we've reached 9:00.

23 I mean here are the options that I
24 can imagine that we end the hearing after Danielle
25 has been able to confirm the information --

1

2

3

MS. BURGER: I have one -- I have
one more person.

4

CHAIRMAN REISS: All right.

5

6

Let's hold off Danielle, let's
just figure out we want to proceed.

7

8

So after Leah and Sheila's
information can be vetted we can end.

9

10

11

12

13

I wrote down the names of everyone
who had their hand raised at 9:00. So we could go
through those people and if there's a spoofer in
there, we could just shut them down. Or we could,
I mean, there might be another option to those.

14

15

16

So kind of end after we, you know,
dealt with the verified speakers or we could take a
risk with the others.

17

18

19

20

21

MS. JOZA: I actually agree.
Let's take a risk. If we detect them, we can
disconnect them immediately. That's, I mean, I'm
pretty sure that will be the best route rather than
waiting.

22

23

24

25

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. So then
I'm going to say no other additional names. People
who raised their hands after 9:00, I say we don't
-- don't use those names because I think the people

1

2 who had their hands up before 9:00, does that make
3 sense? Is that a reasonable way forward?

4

MR. GONZALEZ-RIVERA: Yes. Let's
5 go through the names that we already have raised
6 hands and that's it. I think that's a good
7 compromise.

8

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

9

Danielle, do you want to go to the
10 speaker that you've identified.

11

MS. BURGER: Sure.

12

Rosalie Grossman, you're on the
13 line.

14

MS. GROSSMAN: Yes, hello.

15

I'm glad that I finally got
16 through.

17

My name is Rosale Grossman. I've
18 been a member of MET Council on Housing and I've
19 been a rent stabilized tenant for 46 years.

20

I had decided not to testify this
21 year because I knew that there were limited slots
22 and I wanted them to be available to the many
23 tenants who could not pay their rent.

24

However, after watching the
25 spectacle that occurred yesterday, I feel that I

1

2 must speak up.

3

4 Many low income tenants do not
5 have the technology to testify in a virtual meeting
6 so their numbers are greatly reduced. I'm glad
7 that more tenants are testifying today so that the
8 RGB will realize that tenants have not been able to
9 pay rent, electricity, gas and phone bills, to
10 clothe their children and put food on the table due
11 to three months of unemployment.

12

13 This has been a great opportunity
14 for the landlord lobby to bring out their troops
15 with their sad stories about how they will be
16 bankrupt and unable to maintain their properties if
17 the RGB does not give them a large rent hike this
18 year.

19

20 What have they done with the money
21 they have accumulated by abusing tenants over the
22 many years before the new rent law was implemented
23 last year? Let's remember the tactics they used to
24 increase rents above the rent stabilization
25 threshold so they could deliberately decimate the
26 rent stabilized apartments in the City in order to
27 charge outrageous rents to market rate tenants.

28

29 We remember illegal evictions,

1

2 vacancy bonuses and inflated renovation costs. We
3 are still paying multiple, old MCIs and IAIs,
4 compounded upon each other and lasting for forever.
5 And now they're demanding larger rent increases on
6 the backs of low and middle income tenants.

7 And the landlords who have
8 financially benefited from all of their past and
9 current abuses come here and beg for higher rents.
10 If they are in such dire straits, why do they not
11 open their books and request a hardship increase.
12 And why are they warehousing large numbers of
13 apartments instead of renting them. When asked,
14 they have difficulty telling you exactly how many
15 rent stabilized apartments they actually have.

16 And how many market rate
17 apartments are they receiving most of their income
18 from.

19 We need a rollback.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
22 your testimony.

23 MS. GROSSMAN: Thank you.

24 MS. BURGER: David, (inaudible).

25 CHAIRMAN REISS: Danielle, I

1

2 didn't hear you.

3

4 MS. BURGER: I have a person
registered, Ramona Monegro.

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Great.

6

MS. MONEGRO: Speaking Spanish.

7

(Spanish Translation)

8

9 MS. MONEGRO: "My name is Ramona
Monegro. I live at 215 164th Street in the Bronx.
10 My landlord is David Eisendein. I belong to both
11 CASA and my building's tenants' association.

12

13 I'm reaching out to the RGB to
demand that upon making your decision regarding
14 rent payments for houses and apartments, you take
15 into consideration the economic situation we're
16 experiencing at present. We're going through a
17 crisis. These are hard times. And with the
18 pandemic, we'll probably have to cope with worse
19 conditions that are untenable. When you make your
20 decision, please, be mindful that we not only make
21 rent payments. We also need to buy groceries and
22 medication. We need to pay utilities like our light
23 and phone bills, which are also priorities. We
24 can't deal with so many outside pressures. It is up
25 to the RGB to make a fair decision. RGB, you have

1
2 the power to do this. You have the authority to do
3 so and can avoid evictions and displacing people.
4 It's horrible to think of what's to come or what
5 we're currently going through. Our peace of mind or
6 our worries and depression depend on you. We may
7 feel incapable or helpless if we are faced with a
8 rent increase. We trust that you will value our
9 efforts for being here tonight. Please, think about
10 the fact that we need a rent rollback and a freeze.
11 Thank you!"

12 MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

13 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
14 your testimony.

15 MS. GARCIA: Thank you, Ramona.

16 MS. BURGER: We have one more
17 speaker from Sheila. And then we can go to the
18 people who had their hands raised prior to 9:00.

19 We have Emanuel Padia.

20 Go ahead, Emanuel.

21 (No response.)

22 MS. BURGER: Can someone in
23 Spanish ask Emanuel --

24 MS. GARCIA: Emanuel is
25 bilingual.

1

2 (No response.)

3

MS. GARCIA: Emanuel, we can't
4 hear you. If you can hear us -- if you can't hear
5 us then I don't know what to do.

6

Let me text him.

7

Emanuel, can you hear us now?

8

(No response.)

9

MS. BURGER: Okay. I think we'll
10 move on to people with their hands raised.

11

We will start with Brian Litz.

12

Go ahead, Brian.

13

MR. LITZ: Good evening.

14

Thank you very much.

15

Can you hear me?

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

17

Thank you, Brian.

18

MR. LITZ: My name is Brian Litz
19 and I own a small, eight-unit, completely
20 rent-stabilized building, which my wife and I
21 bought to live in as our only family home.

22

But the 2019 HSTPA trampled our
23 rights. In what bizarre world does the State have
24 the right to prohibit us to live in our own
25 property?

1

2

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25

First and foremost, I completely sympathize for victims of the current pandemic. But to be blunt, this entire discussion is somewhat ridiculous. Why? Because it's a basic human nature to want to pay as little as possible for everything, not just rent.

Councilman Levine, if you're still living, I live in your district and your lip service sounds devine but if you really cared that much, you and the City would provide direct assistance to those in need. Instead, you're simply conveying a public benefit but forcing private individuals to pay for that benefit instead of the public at large.

The City and State are being complete hypocrites and crying crocodile tears.

The RGB rate limits are counterproductive by nature for two reasons, two main reasons.

One, by not being able to charge reasonable market rates, developers will simply stop building any low income housing, as is in evidence from the HTS -- HSTPA.

Two, the current housing provider

1

2 as the cost to maintain a building surpasses the
3 income it generates, I will simply stop providing
4 housing. Both options leave less housing.

5

6 Finally, to the tenant activists
7 saying landlords are not hurting. You are
8 absolutely wrong. All might not be hurting but
9 most of us are.

10

11 Through all of your personal
12 anecdotes about the rent being too high, I
13 empathize.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Mr. Litz, thank
16 you for your testimony.

17

18 MR. LITZ: Okay.

19

20 Thank you for letting us speak.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you.

23

24 MS. BURGER: We're going to hear
25 from a phone number ending in --

26

27 CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello. We can
28 hear you.

29

30 MR. MARIAN: Hello. Hello.

31

32 MS. BURGER: Yes.

33

34 MR. MARIAN: Hi. My name is
35 Julian Marian. I live in northern Manhattan. I'm
36 currently living in a rent stabilized apartment.

1

2

3

4

5

Why I think that landlords should have been -- shouldn't benefit because they -- the economic future of the City is still very uncertain.

6

7

8

Actually, they said -- they just predicted a high unemployment rate of ten percent by the end of the year.

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

And we will have a more slow economic growth in the City for the next two years.

So I think a lot of people are unemployed at this point. I'm currently unemployed too. Even though I'm searching, I haven't been able to find any employment yet. But I think the situation is -- is getting worse and worse for a lot of people in the City.

17

18

19

So I think -- actually a rent rollback would be -- would be very helpful for a lot of people right now in the City.

20

21

So I want to justify this and let the board know about my situation.

22

Thank you very much.

23

24

CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for your testimony.

25

MS. BURGER: We're going to hear

1

2 from a phone number ending in 203.

3

You're on the line.

4

MARIA: Hello.

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

6

MARIA: Can you hear me?

7

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes.

8

MARIA: Can you hear me all

9

right?

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, we can.

11

MARIA: Okay.

12

Thank you.

13

Hi. My name is Maria.

14

I help my grandma run our

15

building. Her parents were immigrants and

16

converted it into a brownstone.

17

We feel bad that some people have

18

been affected by COVID-19.

19

You have heard a lot of data about

20

how our expenses have skyrocketed. Our taxes have

21

gone up 60 percent over the last five years.

22

But let me share a little bit of

23

history with our building. We've had to make

24

multiple capital improvements because of leaks in

25

the building that have occurred while our rent

1

2 stabilized tenants were away for a week summering
3 in their second homes, upstate, down the shore,
4 down the Cape and even in Europe.

5

These improvements have cost
6 multiple hundreds of thousands of dollars on top of
7 our taxes.

8

The building next door is a
9 single-family home exactly identical to ours.
10 However, their property is valued three times our
11 and their taxes are half ours, although we house so
12 many more families.

13

We are not against rent
14 stabilization inherently. However, these tenants
15 have manipulated the rent regulation system, which
16 does not allow us to rent to tenants who actually
17 need the hope, especially those who serve our
18 neighborhood in their profession.

19

In order to be able to pay our
20 taxes, we keep the remaining apartments at market
21 rate. The majority of our rent regulated tenants
22 are retired and their incomes have not changed due
23 to the pandemic. And most of them have spent their
24 entire quarantine period in their second home.

25

With a rent rollback and taxes, my

1

2 grandma will be put into a zero revenue financial
3 situation this year.

4

5 Tenants who need help, should get
6 help. Like people who go to the grocery store, if
7 they need assistance, they get assistance but the
8 grocers and farmers still get paid in full.

8

9 Our communities have come together
10 to help each other during the COVID-19 pandemic, as
11 they should. However, our family business, family
12 businesses and landlord who are also pushing
13 through the pandemic are also at risk.

13

14 Our taxes are not rolled back. We
15 are barely breaking even.

15

16 Please do not assume that we are
17 all like the landlords who are neglectful and
18 thoughtless.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
20 your testimony.

20

21 MS. BURGER: We're now going to
22 hear from Christina Jeffers.

22

23 MS. JEFFERS: Hello.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REISS: Hello.

24

25 MS. JEFFERS: Yes, hi.

25

My name is -- do you hear me?

1

2

CHAIRMAN REISS: We do.

3

4

MS. JEFFERS: Yes. Hi. My name is Christina Jeffers. I live in Queens, New York.

5

Thanks for having me.

6

7

I just want to say that I want the rollback. This is totally difficult situation for I and my neighbors. We in a very difficult crisis.

9

10

Our landlord is Sallah Realty. I don't see how they can go, these landlords can talk about crying that they need increase. Every year that I come to these hearings, happens that my landlord is buying a new building. He owns already more than 20 buildings with more than 163 units. How can he keep doing this and asking for increase when he can't even keep those buildings he has.

17

18

It's because he has profits. He never going to abandon his property. Why? Because he gets big profits for it. It's not fair that he's keeping us -- but in the top of it, he just try to get -- passing two MCI for over \$9 million with the lousy work that is not done properly.

23

24

This is totally unjust that they don't help us to stop the increase of the rent.

25

I ask you to please help us to --

1

2 to roll back the rent.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
5 your testimony.6 MS. BURGER: We are going to try
7 to hear from Emanuel Padia again.

8 MR. PADIA: Hello.

9 MS. GARCIA: We hear you.

10 MR. PADIA: Speaking Spanish.

11 (Spanish Translation)

12 MR. PADILLA: "Good afternoon! My
13 name is Emanuel and I am a volunteer organizer in
14 the South Bronx. I belong to the tenants' movement
15 in the South Bronx. I'd like to say several things.
16 For starters, we're demanding a rent rollback. The
17 first thing is that landlords don't deserve a rent
18 increase. Why? For example, at 380 E. 189 Street,
19 tenants have no gas. They haven't had any gas since
20 October of last year. Even during the pandemic
21 they've had no gas. The landlord simply wants to
22 charge them for an IAI, an Individual Apartment
23 Improvement. That's all he wants to do.24 At 22-05 Davidson Avenue, there is
25 an absentee landlord. Tenants are living with rats

1

2 and mold while ceilings are caving. This is an
3 outrage! At 386, the landlord, Moshy Pillar, is
4 probably one of the worst landlords in the City. In
5 one of his buildings, 311, he allowed one of the
6 radiators to remain as a violation. He allowed two
7 girls to die after a radiator exploded. He didn't
8 face any jail time. Do you think that's fair?
9 Absolutely not! It's embarrassing that today
10 landlords demand a rent increase. Tenants had to
11 wait on lines during the pandemic in order to get a
12 hold of food. They had to stay inside of their
13 homes. The very homes that were causing them harm,
14 like asthma. Do you think that's fair? That's not
15 fair at all. As a tenant organizer here in the
16 South Bronx, that's very common. That's why I see."

17 MS. BURGER: I just need one
18 second.

19 We're going to hear from Kelvin.

20 MS. GARCIA: Star 9 to unmute
21 yourselves.

22 MS. BURGER: He's not on the
23 phone.

24 CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. I did --
25 Danielle, are there more people that -- that Sheila

1

2 has sent the names of more people as well; is that
3 right? We could work those in too.

4

MS. BURGER: Yeah. It's hard for
5 me to go back and forth a little.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. So do you
7 want to just stick to this for now and then go to
8 the other one next.

9

MS. BURGER: Kelvin, can you
10 unmute yourself, please.

11

MS. GARCIA: If you click on your
12 screen at the bottom, you'll see a microphone with
13 a line through it. That means you can't speak.
14 You have to click on it.

15

(No response.)

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay. Should we
17 just move on to somebody else at least for the
18 short term.

19

MS. BURGER: We're going to go to
20 Nadine Kundros.

21

CHAIRMAN REISS: Nadine, can you
22 hear us?

23

(No response.)

24

CHAIRMAN REISS: We can't hear
25 you.

1

2

MS. BURGER: Nadine.

3

(No response.)

4

MS. BURGER: Going once, going

5

twice. Nadine?

6

(No response.)

7

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Nadine spoke

8

yesterday so she did get a chance to speak before

9

the board.

10

MS. BURGER: We're going to go to

11

Arlene Green.

12

(No response.)

13

MS. BURGER: Arlene, are you

14

there?

15

MS. GREEN: Hi. Can you hear me?

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: We can.

17

MS. GREEN: Okay.

18

I'm the facilitator for the 650

19

Ocean Avenue Tenants Council in Brooklyn.

20

And I've been listening to all the

21

speakers. It's a very difficult time for a lot of

22

people right now.

23

Our landlord is Isaac Stern, he

24

goes under Rush Realty and a whole bunch of other

25

aliases as far as various buildings he owns from

1

2 Brooklyn.

3

I truly believe he's not doing repairs, he's not doing a lot of things. And, you know, if the smaller building owners would actually, you know, do something about the larger one, at least help us do something about the larger ones, I'm all for it. But the tenants here, a lot of our tenants here are immigrants, you know, health care workers, home aides. They can't afford another increase.

12

I'm looking at my lease renewal. Even if you do what you're proposing to zero and zero, I'm still facing a 2.5 percent increase because my new lease goes into effect before your new guidelines go into effect.

17

So a rollback would be very helpful for us. One of my (Zoom inaudible) because he can't afford his own apartment because the student loans are huge.

21

You know, I see these problems with these landlords. People need help.

23

All right.

24

And one of the ways is, you know, is that we need to do something. We try to go to

25

1

2 Housing Court, to take them to court but that's
3 hours away from work for people who can't afford
4 hours away from work.

5 They don't do this with their, you
6 now, tenants that they know (Zoom inaudible) can
7 afford good lawyers.

8 I have a friend who lives in the
9 City in a rent controlled little apartment. He's
10 been there for over 40 years. He's afraid to make
11 a complaint about repairs because he doesn't want
12 to make waves. That's not how anybody should live.

13 Please consider a rent rollback.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
16 your testimony.

17 MS. BURGER: I need just one
18 moment. I'm looking into something.

19 We're going to try Joanne Wong.

20 MS. WONG: Hi. Can you hear me?

21 CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, we can.

22 MS. WONG: All right.

23 Thank you for taking me.

24 I'll make this really quick.

25 So there are a couple of comments

1

2 about property owners being able to get PPP and
3 insurance claims. That's just not true.

4

We don't qualify for PPP and
5 insurance companies are denying all our claims.

6

There's comments about how
7 landlords are collecting 30 something cents on
8 every dollar. This does not include capital
9 expenditures or any financing costs.

10

I just spent hundreds of thousands
11 of dollars replacing all the electric and I'm not
12 getting any rent increase for that.

13

Thirdly, this whole dynamic about
14 landlords and tenants and who's going to pay what
15 and it's out of someone's pocket. There's a third
16 party that no one is talking about and that's the
17 government. Okay.

18

I've been in so many meetings with
19 local electeds. City Councilmembers, we'd say, hey,
20 SCRIE and DRIE, that's a popular program. That
21 infrastructure is in place. Why don't you expand
22 that to include relief for tenants who have been
23 impacted by COVID. Right. And then the landlords
24 can get basically a reduction in their property
25 taxes.

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But you ask them, no one wants to touch that with the exception of like two people, no wants -- the City wants the property taxes. They're not willing to cut their property tax revenue in order to give tenants relief.

That's what everyone should be going -- talking to. They should be going to their City Council and saying, how come you don't expand SCRIE or DRIE? How come you're not giving tenant relief and cutting property taxes? Why aren't you doing that?

So, you know:

Senator Myrie;

Councilman Kalos;

Councilman Powers;

Councilman Gibson;

Councilman Mark Levine;

Assemblymember Epstein;

Assemblymember Rosenthal.

All of them that have come and talked, ask them, why don't you expand SCRIE or DRIE and give the tenant the relief they need and give the property owners the relief they need.

Thank you.

1

2 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you for
3 your testimony.

4 Danielle, am I correct in saying
5 that that's all of the unregistered speakers who
6 had raised their hands by 9:00?

7 MS. BURGER: That is correct.

8 CHAIRMAN REISS: All right.

9 And I believe that Sheila may have
10 sent some other names. Should we try to work
11 through those names?

12 MS. BURGER: I can't find them on
13 the list of attendees.

14 CHAIRMAN REISS: Sheila, any
15 thoughts?

16 MS. GARCIA: Danielle, you're
17 speaking about the last two people's full names and
18 numbers that I sent you.

19 MS. BURGER: I'm speaking about
20 Amy and Carlos -- oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

21 MS. GARCIA: Their name is not --
22 they already testified.

23 MS. BURGER: Yeah, no, I'm sorry.
24 I messed up.

25 There's just one name, Rogelio.

1

2

I think we got everybody else who was able to be gotten.

3

4

MS. GARCIA: I thought she was on. Can you give me --

5

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Leah, any other names coming through you?

7

8

MS. GOODRIDGE: I e-mailed the one person who I had testified, I think, both of them did actually. So yeah.

10

11

CHAIRMAN REISS: And Patti or Scott, did you receive any names from owner representatives?

12

13

14

MS. STONE: I think the two people that had e-mailed me, spoke.

15

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: Great.

17

All right.

18

So my -- my sense is once we resolve the issue with Sheila, I think we've coming towards a conclusion unless someone tells me otherwise.

19

20

21

22

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I think, David, I'd just reiterate that you're welcome to leave testimony on our website again, which is nyc.gov/rgb. And we will keep that open certainly

23

24

25

1

2 through tomorrow so you can upload video, oral
3 testimony or written testimony.

4

So please, please do that if you
5 didn't have a chance to speak tonight.

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes. I think
7 your comments --

8

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I think you see
9 that quite a bit. So we're going to make sure that
10 those get to the board members so they can review
11 them.

12

CHAIRMAN DE CHANCE: Yes. So I
13 think Andrew's comments are particularly directed
14 towards Bill Widener, Lurn Tompson, Michael NYC,
15 Sharon and the person -- with the number 170 and
16 Maria Aguirra, who I believe has testified already
17 tonight.

18

So if you'd like to submit
19 additional testimony, we have all been working
20 through that testimony as soon as the staff has
21 forwarded to it and it will receive our full
22 attention.

23

MS. BURGER: If somebody could
24 give out the phone number if you don't have
25 internet access. Does anybody have the phone

1

2 number handy to call in?

3

4 CHAIRMAN REISS: Oh, you're
5 talking to us, Danielle.

6

7 MR. HOBERMAN: Yes, I have it.
8 You can leave a message by just dialing this
9 number: 929-256-5472. 929-256-5472.

10

11 MS. GARCIA: Sorry. I'm being
12 told that Rogelio is on the Zoom. I don't know if
13 it's like under a different number but it seems
14 like -- let me look up his number.

15

16 MS. GOODRIDGE: While we're
17 waiting on that, I have a -- I got a question from
18 one of our advocates who wants to know for the
19 videos that we're receiving, and audios that we are
20 receiving in Spanish that are testifying that we're
21 receiving that they will be translated to English
22 for board members.

23

24 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, we could
25 do that.

26

27 MS. GOODRIDGE: Thank you.
28 I appreciate it.

29

30 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, we could
31 do that. That may take a little more time but we
32 can arrange for our interpreters to do that for us.

1

2

MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay.

3

Thank you.

4

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: There are

5

some that we got in Spanish written that were

6

translated --

7

MS. GOODRIDGE: Yeah.

8

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: -- which I

9

believe I sent around. If not, I will tomorrow.

10

MS. GOODRIDGE: Yeah, I speak

11

Spanish but it sort is now dawning on me,

12

especially after the question was asked --

13

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Sure.

14

MS. GOODRIDGE: -- that not

15

everyone might understand.

16

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, we'll do

17

our best to get it to you as quick as possible.

18

I mean we could send it around

19

if -- I know we do have a lot of folks who do

20

understand Spanish and then you would have an

21

opportunity but then we could resend it with the

22

English as well -- translation -- so.

23

MS. GOODRIDGE: Okay. Great.

24

Thank you.

25

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Just a reminder,

1

2 June 17th is our final vote and we will be doing it
3 virtual starting at 7:00 p.m. Live stream on
4 YouTube on the same YouTube channel as tonight's
5 public hearing.

6 MS. GOODRIDGE: For the world.

7 CHAIRMAN REISS: I feel like we're
8 DJs or sports announcers filling in the empty space
9 on the --

10 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: You know what,
11 we should get commercial advertising.

12 (Laughter.)

13 MS. GARCIA: Commercialize us
14 more.

15 Danielle, I sent you Sharon's
16 name. Is it because it's only her first name that
17 we can't get her to testify. She's been waiting
18 the whole time.

19 MS. BURGER: Oh, I -- yeah.

20 MS. GARCIA: She's one of the
21 names I sent to you with C, last name C.

22 MS. BURGER: Okay. If you're
23 sure that's her, we'll give it a shot.

24 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Okay. Let's
25 give it a --

1

2

MS. GARCIA: I'm not --

3

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Let's give it a

4

try.

5

CHAIRMAN REISS: We've had a good

6

string.

7

MS. BURGER: Sharon, you're on

8

the line.

9

(No response.)

10

MS. BURGER: Are you unmuted,

11

Sharon?

12

(No response.)

13

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Can you unmute?

14

(No response.)

15

MS. GARCIA: I can't tell if

16

she's on the phone or on --

17

CHAIRMAN REISS: She's muted on

18

her device.

19

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Yeah, she's

20

muted on her end.

21

MS. GARCIA: Sharon, you're on

22

mute. So you have to hit the unmute button on the

23

bottom of the screen. It should be on the left

24

side of your phone or whatever device you'r using.

25

SHARON: Hi. Hello.

1

2 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Hey, Sharon.

3 MS. CANTZ: Hi. I'm Sharon
4 Cantz.

5 MS. GOODRIDGE: Oh, Sharon.

6 MS. CANTZ: Yes.

7 MS. GOODRIDGE: Hi.

8 MS. CANTZ: Hi.

9 So I'm president at 60 West 91st
10 Street tenants association and, you know, I've
11 heard all -- I can said, we've had people in my
12 building that died of the virus. And I don't know
13 what's going to happen to their families because
14 some of them are the bread winners.

15 So I understand what tenants are
16 coming from. I know where landlords are coming
17 from, except for the fact that my landlord is still
18 building and he's still warehousing.

19 My question is, if you have no
20 money, why are you building and why would you
21 warehouse? So I just want to put that out there.

22 And thank you for listening.

23 CHAIRMAN REISS: Thank you,
24 Sharon.

25 MS. CANTZ: Thank you.

1

2

Good night.

3

CHAIRMAN REISS: Good night.

4

5

MS. BURGER: Sheila, these last couple of people don't seem to be here.

6

7

MS. GARCIA: I tried every which way to get those back on to this one line to give testimony but I can't get them to get on -- so.

9

10

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I think we got a lot of them. So I appreciate your effort. It seems like we did get a lot of those folks who had registered to come back on, which is great.

11

12

13

CHAIRMAN REISS: All right.

14

Michael NYC;

15

16

Maria Aguirra, who I believe has testified already; and,

17

18

Jana Leo, we look forward to receiving your testimony through our website. And that could be either video, audio or written.

20

I think we're coming to an end.

21

22

Sheila, Leah, any -- any other thoughts or no? We're good. Okay.

23

24

So I would just like to say, you know, I think the Zoom bombing, which I'd read about in the paper but I've never experienced, is

25

1

2 very upsetting for me personally but I'm sure for
3 many people who have attended and board members and
4 staff, and it's just a reminder that democracy is a
5 fragile thing and a really important part of
6 democracy is that people have an opportunity to be
7 heard and that they have the right to petition the
8 government about things that they feel strongly
9 about.

10

I'm just really pleased that it
11 took a little bit of back and forth amongst all of
12 us but I feel like we've really let everyone be
13 heard who was here and participating by 9:00 p.m.,
14 which is our hearing time. I'm pleased that --
15 that we kind of kept the Zoom bombers from really
16 interfering with our process and -- and this whole
17 process of watching the Rent Guidelines Board be
18 able to operate through the COVID crisis so
19 effectively both as a board and a staff just renews
20 faith in government.

21

And as Alex indicated earlier, the
22 staff has really done an extraordinary job of -- of
23 helping us through that process and -- and juggling
24 a lot of technological challenges and then the
25 kinds of challenges we faced today.

1

2

3 And so thanks to everyone for
participating. And --

4

5 MS. BURGER: Can I interject for
one second?

6

CHAIRMAN REISS: Yes, Danielle.

7

8 MS. BURGER: There's a registered
speaker who's on the line. Do we have time to take
9 him?

10

CHAIRMAN REISS: We certainly do.

11

12 MS. BURGER: His name is Amador
Mejia.

13

Amador, you're on the line.

14

(No response.)

15

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

16

17 I don't know what's going on with
like random people, they can't hear us and we can't
18 hear them.

19

20 He's been trying to call all night
and we cannot figure out how to get him on. And we
21 finally got him on.

22

23 MS. BURGER: Yeah, I don't know
what to do. Sorry.

24

MS. GARCIA: Speaking Spanish.

25

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

1

2

So we're -- we've asked that he
submit testimony through the website.

4

So I think we are done.

5

6

And I would just say, I'm proud to
be a New Yorker and I'm glad that I participated in
this process.

8

9

10

And I look forward to seeing those
of you on the staff of the board at our -- at our
meeting next -- next week.

11

12

Andrew, do you have any final
comments?

13

14

MR. MC LAUGHLIN: You know what
I'm going to say.

15

16

CHAIRMAN REISS: And is there a
motion to adjourn?

17

MR. GONZALEZ-RIVERA: I so move.

18

CHAIRMAN REISS: Okay.

19

And we need a second.

20

MS. GOODRIDGE: Second.

21

22

CHAIRMAN REISS: This hearing is
adjourned.

23

And to all a good night.

24

25

(Whereupon, the proceedings were
concluded.)

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STATE OF NEW YORK)

SS.

COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public within and
for the State of New York, do hereby certify that
the foregoing pages 1 through 225, taken at the
time and place aforesaid, is a true and correct
transcription of the Videconference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my name this 11th day of June, 2020.

Marc Russo

MARC RUSSO

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