

1 THE CITY OF NEW YORK
2 RENT GUIDELINES BOARD

3 -----x

4 **VIRTUAL ZOOM**
5 **PUBLIC MEETING**
6 **OF**
7 **THE DIRECTORS**

8 -----x

9 June 8, 2022
10 6:00 p.m.

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B E F O R E:

DAVID REISS,
THE CHAIR

1 **A P P E A R A N C E S:**

2

3 **Board of Directors:**

4 David Reiss, Chair

5 Alex Schwartz

6 Robert Ehrlich

7 Christina Smyth

8 Sheila Garcia

9 Adan Soltren

10

11 **S T A F F:**

12 Andrew McLaughlin

13 Executive Director

14 Brian Hoberman

15 Research Director

16 Danielle Burger

17 Deputy Research Director

18 Charmaine Superville

19 Office Manager

20

21

22

23

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25

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

<u>2</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
3	Deborah Glick.....	12
4	Jabari Brisport.....	14
5	Linda Rosenthal.....	16
6	Emily Gallagher.....	18
7	Leon Goldenberg.....	20
8	Steven Mullen.....	23
9	Phara Souffrant Forrest.....	26
10	Hal Dorfman.....	28
11	Michael Murray.....	30
12	Robert Lee.....	32
13	Helen Greenberg.....	34
14	Jon D'Errico.....	37
15	Nadine Korchak.....	39
16	Alvin Doyle.....	42
17	Pablo Zevallos.....	44
18	Ana Reyes.....	46
19	Hannah Yukon.....	49
20	Jinghai Feng.....	52, 149
21	Mark Levine.....	55
22	Maggie Sanchez.....	59
23	Spencer Garcia.....	61
24	Claudia Juarez.....	65

25 (Index continued on following page.)

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

<u>2</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
3	Luz Rosero.....	66
4	Catalina Miramon.....	68
5	Teresita Aguilar.....	70
6	Sarah McDaniel-Dyer.....	71
7	Nova Lucero.....	74
8	Sarah Lazur.....	76
9	Michael Perles.....	79
10	Lyric Thompson.....	81
11	Jennifer Epstein.....	84
12	Susi Schropp.....	86
13	Diane Stein.....	88
14	Samantha Bravo.....	90
15	Michele Jackson.....	92
16	Nathan Bravo.....	95
17	Sherri Cohen.....	96
18	Nora Huertero.....	98
19	Gale Brewer.....	100
20	Estelita Molina.....	103
21	James Neimeister.....	105
22	Cristal Calderon.....	112
23	Eric Margules.....	115
24	Sandra.....	117

25 (Index continued on following page.)

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INDEX OF SPEAKERS

1

2 **SPEAKER** **PAGE**

3 Sfulson.....118

4 Zenayda Bonilla.....119

5 Teddy Thomas.....121

6 Yessina Carvajal.....123

7 Johnf.....124

8 Gordon (Greg) Lee.....126

9 Marcela Mitaynes.....128

10 Mimi Mitchell.....130

11 Alan Chun.....132

12 Tim Paulson.....136

13 Maria Barbara Lopez.....139

14 Khadija Haynes.....141

15 Camille Sosa.....143

16 Joyce Webster.....145

17 Maricela Sosa.....147

18 Channa Camins.....150

19 No Name Given.....153

20 Veronica Mirafuente.....155

21

22

23

24

25

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: I'd like to welcome
3 you to this public hearing of the New York
4 City Rent Guidelines Board.

5 I'm David Reiss, Chair of the
6 Board. This is the second of four public
7 hearings to consider comments concerning
8 proposed rent adjustments for leases for
9 apartments, lofts, hotels and other housing
10 units subject to the Rent Stabilization Law of
11 1969 and the Emergency Tenant Protection Act
12 of 1974.

13 These adjustments will effect
14 renewal leases commencing between October 1st,
15 2022 through September 30th, 2023. I'll now
16 take roll call please respond present.

17 Christina DeRose.

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIR REISS: Robert Ehrlich.

20 MR. EHRLICH: Present.

21 CHAIR REISS: Sheila Garcia.

22 MS. GARCIA: Present.

23 CHAIR REISS: Christian

24 Gonzalez-Rivera.

25 (No response.)

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1-844-MGR-RPTG

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: Arpit Gupta.

3 (No response.)

4 CHAIR REISS: Alex Schwartz.

5 MR. SCHWARTZ: Present.

6 CHAIR REISS: Christine Smyth.

7 MS. SMYTH: Present.

8 CHAIR REISS: Adan Soltren.

9 MR. SOLTREN: Present.

10 CHAIR REISS: David Reiss,
11 present.

12 Let the record show that we have a
13 quorum.

14 Next meeting of this board will be
15 a virtual public hearing. This Wednesday,
16 June 8th, this will be our last virtual public
17 hearing to comment on the proposed guidelines;
18 however, we'll also be conducting in-person
19 public hearings on June 13th and June 15th.
20 The details for attending these hearings to be
21 found in the meeting schedule on our website
22 nyc.gov/rgb or by calling (212)669-7680
23 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

24 You can also preregister to speak
25 at the in-person hearings on our website or by

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1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 calling (212)669-7480 between 9:00 a.m. and
3 5:00 p.m. Preregistration for the June 13th
4 hearing will end at 12:00 p.m. on June 10th;
5 for the June 15th meeting, at 12:00 p.m. on
6 June 14th.

7 Each of these hearings will also
8 be streamed live on our YouTube channel. To
9 find out how to watch, visit the RGB website
10 nyc.gov/rgb or call the RGB at (212)669-7480
11 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

12 We'll also be taking comments on
13 the proposed guidelines outside of our public
14 hearings. This testimony must be submitted no
15 later than Thursday, June 16th. You can find
16 information on submitting testimony on our
17 website nyc.gov/rgb or you can leave audio
18 testimony by calling (929)256-5472, that's
19 (929)256-5472.

20 The final vote will take place on
21 Tuesday, June 21st starting at 7:30 p.m. at
22 the Great Hall on Cooper Union, East Seventh
23 Street at the corner of Third Avenue in
24 Manhattan. The public may attend in person or
25 may watch the vote live by streaming at the

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 RGB's YouTube channel. To find out how, visit
3 the RGB website, nyc.gov/rgb, or call the RGB
4 at (212)669-7480 between 9:00 a.m. and
5 5:00 p.m.

6 I'd like to thank you all for
7 attending this public hearing, the Board is
8 looking forward to hearing from many of you
9 regarding the proposed rent adjustment
10 guidelines. Before we proceed with testimony,
11 I would like to go over the rules and
12 procedures for those who are testifying before
13 the Board.

14 We will begin with speakers who
15 registered in advance, we will alternate
16 between tenants, owners and public officials
17 with a speaking limit of two minutes per
18 person. If there is time at the end of the
19 hearing we'll then hear from unregistered
20 speakers at a first come, first served basis.
21 We'll explain how to do that after all
22 registered speakers have spoken.

23 When it is your turn to speak, a
24 staff member will promote you from an attendee
25 to a panelist and you will have the ability to

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 speak and display your video if you so choose.
3 Please wait for your name to be announced
4 before you commence your testimony. If you
5 are attending the Zoom hearing with a name or
6 phone number that differs from the name or
7 phone number you've registered with, we'll not
8 be able to identify you and you may lose your
9 place in queue. If you're not an attendee of
10 the hearing at the time your name is called,
11 you will also lose your place in the queue.

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

18 There are Spanish interpreters
19 here today to listen to testimony in Spanish.
20 Please use the interpretation button in Zoom
21 to choose the appropriate channel. For
22 English speakers select the English channel to
23 hear English speakers as well as Spanish
24 speakers interpreted into English. If you do
25 not choose an interpretation channel, you will

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 hear all testimony in the native language of
3 the speaker.

4 If you're using the Zoom app on a
5 smart phone, you may find the interpretation
6 button by pressing the 4 button.

7 We expect many speakers today and
8 the Board wants to hear from as many speakers
9 as possible in the limited time we have for
10 this hearing. We understand that it may be
11 difficult to say everything you want us to
12 hear in just two minutes, but please
13 understand that it is our responsibility to
14 make sure that everyone who has taken the time
15 to join us to testify will have a fair
16 opportunity to be heard.

17 That being said, let me just add
18 one last point. Please speak somewhat slowly
19 so that the interpreters can keep up with you,
20 that will help everyone understand your
21 comments as much as possible. We thank you
22 for your cooperation and we look forward to
23 testimony.

24 (Whereupon, the above portion was
25 translated into Spanish by an interpreter.)

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: Thank you.

3 We'll begin with testimony.

4 We have Assemblymember Glick.

5 Welcome, Assemblymember, we look forward to
6 your testimony.

7 ASSEMBLYMEMBER GLICK: Thank you
8 very much. Shall I begin?

9 CHAIR REISS: Please.

10 ASSEMBLYMEMBER GLICK: I want to
11 thank you for the opportunity to testify
12 before you today regarding these changes in
13 rent stabilization. I represent Tribeca,
14 SoHo, Greenwich Village, and I'm here today,
15 however, on behalf of all rent-regulated
16 tenants in New York.

17 As the City emerges from the COVID
18 crisis, we're experiencing a housing
19 emergency. The City's Department of Housing
20 Preservation and Development recently released
21 a 2021 housing and vacancy survey. Those
22 results found that the number of available
23 apartments for low- and middle-income
24 residents is at its lowest level since 1991,
25 with less than one percent of apartments

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 renting for \$1,500 or less.

3 I'm going to move really fast here
4 because I see the time evaporating.

5 The rents are soaring, recovery is
6 uneven; wealthy New Yorkers are doing better,
7 the poor and middle-class members of our
8 community are doing very poorly. Unemployment
9 is at seven percent, twice the national
10 average and twice that for black New Yorkers.

11 This year, the Board has presented
12 proposed two, to four percent increase for
13 one-year renewals and four to six for two-year
14 renewals. These increases are the biggest
15 jump since 2013 at a time when economic
16 opportunities for financially vulnerable New
17 Yorkers are extremely limited.

18 Given the insecurity of so many
19 New Yorkers, I urge you to take compassion,
20 responsive and moral action and vote for
21 continued rent freeze or the lowest possible
22 increase that would satisfy the most pressing
23 financial needs of our small homeowners who
24 have not gotten the assistance that large
25 owners have in fact received.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 Thank you very much.

3 CHAIR REISS: Thank you,
4 Assemblymember.

5 We have Senator Brisport as our
6 next speaker. Welcome, Senator.

7 SENATOR BRISPORT: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chair, and thank you for giving me a
9 chance to speak tonight. It is a pleasure to
10 have the opportunity to speak on behalf of
11 tenants and housing rights in New York City
12 today.

13 You know, a few months ago I saw a
14 proposal for upwards of nine percent for
15 two-year leases, my eyes almost popped out of
16 my head, that's an unacceptable amount of
17 increase. And even the recent ones voted on,
18 two to four percent for one-year leases and
19 four to six percent for two-year leases, just
20 like the Assemblymember said right before me,
21 those are the largest increases in nearly a
22 decade since 2013.

23 This is all while the cost of
24 living is increasing for everyday New Yorkers
25 on everyday items, while wages are not

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 increasing in the way they should and many
3 renters are on fixed incomes. Many renters
4 are still on the job hunt and if we do
5 displace renters with rents that they cannot
6 afford, based on the decision that this board
7 makes, if renters cannot afford to stay in
8 their homes and are displaced, there is
9 nowhere for them to go.

10 There is almost no truly
11 affordable housing in this city and there will
12 be a domino effect of increasing homelessness
13 crisis if people do not have stable housing,
14 it will be harder for them to get jobs which
15 has a devastating effect not only for them but
16 also for New York City's economic recovery as
17 a whole.

18 So I encourage the Board to take
19 all this into account as you're voting to do
20 the -- to vote for the choice that keeps the
21 most people in their homes, to either freeze
22 the rents or roll them back. And thank you
23 for giving me an opportunity to speak tonight.

24 CHAIR REISS: Thank you, Senator.

25 Our next speaker is Assemblymember

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 Rosenthal. Welcome, Assemblymember.

3 ASSEMBLYMEMBER ROSENTHAL: Can you
4 hear me?

5 CHAIR REISS: Yes, we can.

6 ASSEMBLYMEMBER ROSENTHAL: All
7 right. Thank you. Where's the clock?

8 CHAIR REISS: It just went up and
9 you have your full two minutes so whenever
10 you're ready.

11 ASSEMBLYMEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.
12 I don't actually see it, but I'll go fast.

13 Thank you. I'm Assemblymember
14 Linda Rosenthal, I represent the Upper West
15 Side and parts of Hell's Kitchen and the 67th
16 Assembly District.

17 Tonight it is actually appalling
18 that I must stand before the Rent Guidelines
19 Board to explain why a potential increase in
20 rent of between two and four percent for
21 one-year leases and four and six for two-year
22 leases would be financially catastrophic to
23 the millions of rent-regulated tenants who
24 call this city home.

25 Unlike members of the RGB, I don't

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 need binder's worth of data to understand how
3 the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives
4 of New Yorkers.

5 Since mid-March 2020, my office
6 has been flooded with phone calls, e-mails
7 from people seeking, pleading for any type of
8 financial assistance, whether it be one-shot
9 deals, ERAP, unemployment benefits, private
10 grants. These are people who have everything
11 to lose should the Board green light
12 ill-advised rent increases. Even now, close
13 to two and a half years since the onset of the
14 pandemic, many city residents are still in
15 dire financial straights.

16 One of my constituents who works
17 as a makeup artist lost most of her income
18 during COVID forcing her to search for odd
19 jobs during one of the most tumultuous and
20 unsafe periods in history. Her landlord filed
21 an eviction case against her even though she
22 did apply for ERAP, even the shortage of
23 tenant attorneys, she struggled to defend
24 herself against the landlord and the judge who
25 could not understand why she had difficulty

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 paying down her arrears.

3 This constituent's story is not
4 unique. On the West Side alone more than
5 2,500 of my constituents are fighting for
6 their homes in eviction court. That reality
7 was not depicted in the RGB's most recent
8 income and affordability study.

9 Landlords would have far less
10 trouble keeping pace with the cost -- okay.

11 So I call for rent freeze, if
12 possible. And I understand the small
13 landlords need assistance and we need to do
14 something to help them, but regular tenants
15 are really strapped and it would be
16 catastrophic for many if these large increases
17 were implemented.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIR REISS: Thank you,
20 Assemblymember.

21 We have Assemblymember Gallagher
22 as our next speaker.

23 ASSEMBLYMEMBER GALLAGHER: Thank
24 you very much, I apologize for my location,
25 I'm on the move.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 But I am Assemblymember Emily
3 Gallagher and I represent the 50th AD which is
4 Greenpoint and Williamsburg in Brooklyn.

5 82 percent of my constituents are
6 renters, 18,000 of them live in regulated
7 apartments, 19,000 of them live in unregulated
8 apartments, many of which were formerly
9 regulated apartments that were decontrolled
10 during vacancy decontrol.

11 So it is critical that we maintain
12 these 18,000 rent-stabilized units. And
13 46 percent of my constituents pay more than
14 30 percent of their income for rent and
15 25 percent pay more than half of their income
16 in rent.

17 For a long time I was one of these
18 tenants and I know that my office deals
19 primarily with two kinds of cases; we deal
20 with landlord-tenant harassment cases and we
21 deal with unemployment cases.

22 So I know that my constituents are
23 very strapped, they are struggling to find
24 work. If they are back in the workforce, they
25 are trying to get back on their feet and they

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 absolutely will not be able to weather the
3 storm that a nine percent rent increase would
4 create.

5 Additionally, as one of my
6 predecessors on this hearing said, there is
7 not a great deal of equally affordable housing
8 in the district, we are adding rent-stabilized
9 units through Core 21A but the reality is that
10 those are coming in at a very high level in
11 terms of AMI for our district so many of those
12 apartments are actually starting at the higher
13 level of rents that are available in this
14 district. Most of my renters are paying
15 between \$1,000 and \$2,500 a month so I ask for
16 a rent freeze as well.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIR REISS: Thank you,
19 Assemblymember.

20 Our next speaker is Leon
21 Goldenberg.

22 MR. GOLDENBERG: Good evening.
23 The job of the RGB is to review the increase
24 cost and operations of buildings and that
25 should be the sole function of the RGB.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Whether tenants can or cannot afford an
3 increase is not the job of the RGB, that is
4 the responsibility of the city and the state.

5 When people can't afford to buy
6 milk or eggs, the government gives out food
7 stamps, they don't tell grocers to lower their
8 prices or increase their prices.

9 I've recommended four years, ad
10 nauseam, to many members of the legislature,
11 both city and state, that the program which
12 was enacted for seniors should be introduced
13 on a much larger scale to lower-income people.
14 The city and the state should be picking up
15 the increase of rents like the landlords who
16 are duly entitled to.

17 Over the past eight years,
18 landlords have received a total of five and
19 three-quarter percent, that's it, but taxes
20 alone have increased more than five and
21 three-quarter percent of my rent not over five
22 years. Taxes -- my tax, 25 to about
23 50 percent over the last eight years. Next
24 month my taxes are going up 9.1 percent across
25 all the buildings that we manage. Insurance,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 more than five and three-quarters percent of
3 my rent roll. Insurances have more than
4 tripled in the last eight years and not even
5 talking about the increase in minimum wage,
6 fuel or water, this is basic math. How do you
7 expect us to maintain our buildings?

8 There are no increases outside of
9 what you give us. There are no increases on
10 vacancy. Landlords have 35,000 vacancy
11 required major capital improvements. The
12 10,000 allotted on the new IA program is not
13 sufficient for renovations, nor does it make
14 any financial sense. I'd be happy to show you
15 some of those apartments and see if landlords
16 are exaggerating as to the condition and cost
17 of running these apartments.

18 Years ago RGB gave additional
19 increases on extremely low rents. Yes, I have
20 tenants who pay as low as \$403, so even a four
21 and a half percent increase is only \$18. In
22 buildings we manage, we have 55 apartments
23 with have rents below \$700. Give us the
24 increase based on our actual cost, have the
25 city and state subsidize the tenants.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 I'm happy to answer any questions.

3 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
4 testimony. Just 'cause of time, I think we'll
5 move on.

6 Our next speaker is Steve Mullen.
7 And I would just like to remind everybody,
8 myself included, to try to speak slowly so
9 that the interpreters can keep up with us as
10 they translated us simultaneously.

11 Mr. Mullen, welcome.

12 MR. MULLEN: Thank you. I'm Steve
13 Mullen and I appreciate your time tonight.
14 Tonight I'll briefly touch on number one, the
15 personal impact of the proposed rent
16 guidelines; and two, the pending economic
17 storm facing our city.

18 I'm a 75-year-old resident of Stuy
19 Town living on 20th and FDR. My wife,
20 stepdaughter and I typically share a typical
21 one-bedroom apartment. Even with my social
22 security income and all of us working, our
23 rent is 49 percent of our combined income. We
24 simply can't afford the imposed rent increase
25 of 1,700 and \$2,500 a year on a two-year

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 lease.

3 But moving after just one year is
4 too expensive, and besides the one-year lease
5 only adds to the owners expenses. My
6 suggestion would be both renters and owners
7 greatly benefit from a multiyear lease with no
8 increase.

9 Turning now to the economic storm.
10 You probably have all noticed the many, many
11 empty shops across the city. According to
12 Commercial Edge, Manhattan's commercial
13 vacancies reached 13.1 percent this February.
14 Year-over-year, New York City commercial
15 vacancies increased by 260 basis points, the
16 second largest increase among major US cities.

17 Firstly, residential rates have
18 already increased dramatically. According to
19 the online site Apartment List, New York rents
20 rose 33 percent from January '21 to
21 January '22, doubling the national rate and
22 the highest increase of America's largest
23 cities. Current residents are discouraged
24 from staying and nonresidents are discouraged
25 from returning.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 So now the pending economic storm,
3 and this is huge. 76 percent of all Fortune
4 500 CEOs, including Jaime Diamond, CEO of
5 Chase and Jane Fraiser, CEO of Citibank, say
6 they expect a recession in the next 18 months.

7 In closure, commercial occupancy
8 is declining, rapidly rising residential rents
9 drive renters away and now a recessionary
10 storm is brewing. My suggestion, stable or
11 even lower residential rents will bring more
12 people back the City faster, their companies
13 will follow, business of all size will start
14 to thrive. A win-win. Thank you.

15 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 Our next speaker, just bear with
18 me for a second, is Assemblymember Forrest.

19 Welcome, Assemblymember.

20 MALE SPEAKER: This is Hal
21 Dorfman.

22 CHAIR REISS: Just hold on for a
23 second, we're going to hear from
24 Assemblymember Forrest and then I think you're
25 next.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 ASSEMBLYMEMBER FORREST: Thank
3 you. Good evening, everyone. My name is
4 Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest, I
5 represent the 57th District in Brooklyn and
6 where there are over 16,000 rent-stabilized
7 apartments. That's over 16,000 working
8 people, seniors and families who lives will be
9 impacted by the decision of the Board.

10 I'm also a rent-stabilized tenant
11 myself, I live at Ebbets Field apartments in
12 Brooklyn in Crown Heights along with other
13 1,300 families.

14 Many of them are also struggling,
15 they lost their jobs during the pandemic and
16 to be honest, the conditions at Ebbets Field
17 are deplorable. It's nasty. It's
18 unacceptable for this board to ask my
19 neighbors to pay six percent more when
20 management does not even handle the basics of
21 maintenance and safety in our development.

22 A six percent rent increase is
23 also too much for many of the families that I
24 represent. 42 percent of the renters in my
25 district make less than \$50,000 a year. They

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 are not getting a six percent pay increase at
3 they jobs though, in fact, many of them are
4 already struggling to pay their bills,
5 especially as inflation continues to get
6 worse.

7 New York State landlords are
8 bailed out through the ERAP program but
9 tenants are still working to dig themselves
10 out of the hole the pandemic put them in. The
11 State legislature ended last week, without
12 addressing the housing crisis. We did not
13 pass good-cause eviction which would have kept
14 unregulated tenants in their home and reduced
15 the pressure on the housing market.

16 The historic rights of counsel was
17 passed in New York City Council -- in New York
18 City in 2017 and is barely in effect because
19 so many people are being evicted that tenant
20 attorneys can't even keep up with all the
21 cases.

22 In this environment, the rent
23 increases are proposed by this board will
24 cause unnecessary hardship for thousands of
25 families. So I'm asking please, please

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 consider a rent freeze so that we can really
3 protect my constituents and the constituents
4 of all of the assembly members in this city.
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR REISS: Thank you,
7 Assemblymember.

8 Our next speaker is Hal Dorfman.

9 MR. DORFMAN: Can you hear me?

10 My name is Hal Dorfman, I'm an
11 architect. I have, in the last eight years,
12 owned an eight-family building here in the
13 northwest Bronx. So I have experience working
14 for many landlords throughout the city during
15 my career as well as now managing and owning a
16 building.

17 Let me tell you, it's no pleasure
18 being the landlord. I believe I lived in a
19 country that's operated by the rule of law,
20 and the last I heard there was a 4.9 percent
21 vacancy rate, one-tenth of a point more would
22 make the Rent Stabilization Law illegal. Once
23 we hit a five percent vacancy rate, tenants
24 and everybody else can scream, but the law
25 says that the Rent Stabilization Law becomes

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 ineffective.

3 I have been operating this
4 building, when I started oil was less than a
5 1.35 a gallon. Now I'm paying over \$5 a
6 gallon for fuel oil. I haven't seen a tenant
7 bend down to pick up a piece of garbage in the
8 hallway that they throw. They leave their
9 garbage bags in the hallway.

10 My costs are up. I agree with the
11 first speaker, I agree with the rent
12 association guidelines board. With all the
13 costs, we need a minimum at a four percent on
14 a one-year lease and a six percent on a
15 two-year lease. We've been given in
16 seven years five percent, our costs are
17 quadruple that.

18 What about people who own private
19 property? If we want to make it a state
20 mandate that people should be given housing
21 subsidies, there's the New York City Housing
22 Authority, there's State Housing Authorities,
23 we can provide housing as a citizenry, do not
24 put this on the backs of private owners.

25 We need at least a four percent

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 and a six percent increase just to maintain my
3 building. I need new roofs, I need a new hot
4 water heater. There are things that need to
5 be done.

6 ERAP money, let me tell you, once
7 a landlord, I've heard this, takes ERAP money,
8 that's it. Tenants stay for a year without
9 paying after that. It's like a free ride, the
10 rule of law is being trampled and our country
11 is going down hill. Thank you.

12 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
13 testimony.

14 Our next speaker is Michael
15 Murray.

16 MR. MURRAY: Yes, hello. Good
17 evening and thank you. Can you hear me okay?

18 CHAIR REISS: Yes, Mr. Murray.

19 MR. MURRAY: Let's begin then.

20 During previous meetings and
21 hearings, we've heard both tenants and small
22 landlords talk about the financial hardships
23 they face. The problem is that across the
24 Board, rent increases are blunt instruments
25 that inflict pain on all tenants without

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 channeling financial relief, specifically to
3 the owners who may need it; instead, granting
4 windfall increases to profitable landlords at
5 the expense of all struggling renters.

6 This being the case, I urge the
7 RGB to reject, across the board, rent
8 increases and to support worthy landlords
9 using the hardship process to obtain relief
10 they say they need. At least until the RGB
11 has the means to enact rent increases that
12 vary by location, age of building, percent of
13 stabilized units in a structure and other
14 characteristics that would help funnel relief
15 to landlords that actually need it without
16 needlessly penalizing tenants and enriching
17 already profitable landlords.

18 I'd also like to take a minute to
19 comment on some of what I've heard about how
20 rising interest rates are creating a hardship
21 for owners. The fact is many owners have the
22 option to lock in rates after record lows.
23 Rent peaked in the early 80's, declined for
24 almost 40 years and in fact you're still near
25 record lows. So the hardship hasn't

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 materialized yet and they are asking for an
3 increase based on increases in financing costs
4 when they themselves get to determine how much
5 to borrow and often the borrowing is used to
6 take cash out to fund completely unrelated
7 projects.

8 So we need to say to the facts and
9 we need to recognize that across-the-board
10 increases don't do the job.

11 CHAIR REISS: Thank you,
12 Mr. Murray, for your testimony.

13 Bear with me while we wait for our
14 next speaker. And I believe our next speaker
15 is Robert Lee. Mr. Lee, hi, welcome.

16 MR. LEE: How are you? Thank you
17 for the opportunity to speak and giving me the
18 time to unmute, I'm not familiar with this too
19 well.

20 So we heard from assembly members
21 tonight, we've heard from the senator and they
22 all mentioned rent freeze and that small
23 owners need help.

24 What actually have they done for
25 small owners because all their names appear on

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 every anti-owner bill and law that has been
3 passed out there.

4 I have asked Assemblymember
5 Gallagher numerous times to speak with us to
6 discuss good cause bill and other situations
7 and still no response.

8 We are not given the proper
9 increase to make renovations, the HSPCA
10 limited us to \$15,000 over 15 years. No, it
11 doesn't work, not even on minor renovations;
12 it certainly doesn't work on a major
13 renovation. So many of us do not have the
14 funds to renovate apartments so they stay
15 vacant.

16 We are being bought out like hot
17 cakes by developers, this industry will be
18 lost forever. There are no more user
19 investors coming in where a user would live in
20 the building rent out two or three units,
21 whatever, it's all investors.

22 The regulate -- the increased
23 regulation is just overwhelming. I sympathize
24 with the tenants, I really do. I was very
25 generous with mine during the pandemic but you

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 can't base increases on what can be afforded,
3 you have to base our increases on what our
4 expenses are. And heat, it's gone up about
5 45 percent this year. And we have the usual
6 double-digit increases in insurance and
7 property taxes.

8 We cannot sustain and you're going
9 to have a city full of developers and NYCHA.
10 And like I said, the industry will be lost
11 forever. And it's not, believe me, if you see
12 NYCHA's, they say they are underfunded, it's
13 not, it's mismanaged.

14 Thank you again for the
15 opportunity to speak.

16 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Our next speaker is Helen
19 Greenberg.

20 MS. GREENBERG: Hi. Can you hear
21 me?

22 CHAIR REISS: We can.

23 MS. GREENBERG: Okay, great.
24 Thank you. Thank you so much everyone for
25 your time, I really appreciate it.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 My name is Helen Greenberg and I'm
3 a third-generation small property owner. My
4 family building is from 1869.

5 So what does that mean exactly to
6 be a small property owner of a building from
7 1869? It means constant care, repairs and
8 upgrades.

9 How do you pay for all that
10 constant care when in addition you are
11 bombarded by rising cost of building
12 insurance, property taxes, Con Edison and
13 water and sewage increases just to name a few?

14 The water board is asking for a
15 4.9 increase. One of the reasons the
16 increases are so high is because customers
17 can't afford to pay their water bills. How do
18 you pay for additional reasonable inspections
19 and regulations from the city that we, as
20 owners, incur? Like annual fire extinguisher
21 inspections; backflow inspections; remediating
22 bed bugs, rodents; and the late summer boiler
23 inspection before winter heating season
24 begins; Local Law 152 for new gas lines and
25 lead inspections and costly remediations that

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1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 are required.

3 I recently did an abatement that
4 passed with one company and failed with
5 another lead company. I paid for the same
6 window frame to be scraped and repainted twice
7 by different lead inspectors; it costs
8 thousands of dollars.

9 How do you pay your bills during
10 COVID when half your building moved out of the
11 city and no one wanted to move back into the
12 city for 17 months? The tenants that stayed
13 were primarily RSA tenants and rent
14 controlled. Rents like 710.95, \$569.75,
15 \$732.64, they stayed, in quote, several of our
16 RSA tenants went to their Upstate New York
17 homes to escape COVID in the city.

18 That's another topic.
19 Rent-stabilized renters who have second homes.
20 It would be pretty amazing if you actually had
21 to qualify for rent-stabilized units with your
22 income, that's a tricky topic because there
23 are several of our elected officials that just
24 spoke that live in rent-stabilized units that
25 wouldn't qualify for their most likely

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 rent-stabilized legacy apartment. I am asking
3 for a six percent, one-year lease and an eight
4 percent for two-year lease.

5 CHAIR REISS: Thank you.

6 Our next speaker is Jon D'Errico,
7 welcome.

8 MR. D'ERRICO: Hello and thank you
9 for the opportunity to speak tonight.

10 My name is Jon D'Errico, I live in
11 a rent-stabilized apartment in Peter Cooper
12 Village. I'm also a member of the Peter
13 Cooper Village Stuy Town Tenants Association.

14 I'm a lawyer by trade, I spent
15 hundreds of hours advocating for housing
16 rights on a pro-bono basis over the last
17 couple years. I've seen firsthand the
18 struggle of everyday New Yorkers to afford
19 rent.

20 For these reasons, I'm strongly
21 opposed to the proposed rent increase which
22 are the highest in years. It is self-evident
23 that our city is still recovering from the
24 effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Per the
25 Department of Labor and as cited by

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1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Assemblymember Glick earlier today, New York's
3 unemployment rate is almost double the
4 national average and has spiked to as high at
5 7.6 percent over the past couple months.

6 Further, New York City is lagging
7 job growth is only regained 73 percent of the
8 jobs lost in the pandemic compared to
9 95 percent on average for the nation. I don't
10 think I need to explain to anyone that
11 inflation is now more rampant than ever.
12 These are not statements of opinion, these are
13 facts.

14 The proposed rent hikes could not
15 come at a worse time for the average New
16 Yorker. For instance, my wife is pregnant and
17 is due to give birth within a. Week every
18 dollar I have to spend on increased rent is a
19 dollar I can't spend on my child's care; a
20 dollar I can't spend on food; and a dollar I
21 can't spend on education.

22 New York is not a city where the
23 wants of the few outweigh the needs of the
24 many. For these reasons, the proposed rent
25 hikes should be rejected.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 Thank you again for the
3 opportunity to speak tonight.

4 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
5 time.

6 Our next speaker is Nadine
7 Korchak. You're muted and your camera is off
8 if you want to go on camera.

9 Nadine, you're still muted.

10 Nadine, you're muted. Let's see,
11 nope, still. Nadine --

12 MS. KORCHAK: Can you hear me now?

13 CHAIR REISS: Yes, we can. Do you
14 want to go on camera? You don't have to, just
15 asking.

16 MS. KORCHAK: Yeah, I could go on
17 camera.

18 CHAIR REISS: You're going to need
19 to control that from your end.

20 MS. KORCHAK: Well that's okay
21 then, I'll just start.

22 CHAIR REISS: We're ready for you.

23 MS. KORCHAK: Now I could go?

24 CHAIR REISS: Yeah, go right
25 ahead.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 MS. KORCHAK: Okay. My family has
3 been a small mom-and-pop owner on the Upper
4 West Side for more than 80 years. Along with
5 the pandemic, all building expenses have
6 skyrocketed.

7 When de Blasio took office, our
8 property taxes were 62,000; now they are
9 90,000. For the first time, our accountant
10 has told us that our best financial decision
11 is to keep an apartment vacant.

12 The years of low and no rent
13 increases have had a cumulative effect. The
14 stabilized rent is too low to justify
15 renovations. We don't have the cash to pay
16 the mandated improvements to bring the
17 apartment to code. Electric, lead.

18 So since we don't have the cash to
19 pay for these mandated improvements, the next
20 step would be to get financing. Well when the
21 bank looked at our books, why would I think
22 they would give money to a business that loses
23 money? The cumulative effect of low rents
24 over the years has unfortunately brought us to
25 where our building is today and there are

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 several other buildings on our block in the
3 same situation. Our only choice is to keep
4 the apartment vacant.

5 Please don't force us to sell out.
6 Operating expenses have skyrocketed and our
7 rent does not cover these expenses. Please
8 pass the eight percent for two-year leases and
9 six percent for one-year leases. This will
10 help us maintain our aging housing stock.
11 Thank you.

12 And if I have two seconds left,
13 our vacancy rate in -- for us is ten percent.
14 And I just want to address the assemblywoman
15 and the senators, all of our regulated
16 apartments are occupied by multimillionaires.
17 Our \$600 rent apartment has a \$2 million beach
18 house.

19 So I would love to sit down and
20 talk about common sense rents for people who
21 need them and yet we give cheap rent to
22 millionaires. Thanks.

23 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 All right. We're just waiting for

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 our next speaker to be promoted.

3 MS. BURGER: David, Andrew asked
4 me to admit Alvin Doyle, but I'm having some
5 trouble doing that if you just give me one
6 minute.

7 CHAIR REISS: Yep.

8 MS. BURGER: Or Brian, can you try
9 to do it?

10 CHAIR REISS: I just did. Alvin
11 Doyle, you are muted and you're not on camera
12 if you want to go on camera.

13 MR. DOYLE: Hello.

14 CHAIR REISS: I can hear you now.
15 I don't see you, but I can hear you.

16 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Well I guess I
17 have a voice for being off camera.

18 CHAIR REISS: Okay, we're ready.

19 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Well let me
20 see. Let me see here.

21 CHAIR REISS: Okay, we got your
22 face, too, that's great.

23 MR. DOYLE: Okay, great. Thank
24 you. Okay. My name is Alvin Doyle and I'm a
25 rent-stabilized senior citizen living in

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Stuyvesant Town. I share my apartment with my
3 wife, Patricia, and we are both members of the
4 Stuyvesant Town Peter Cooper Village Tenants
5 Association.

6 As you may be aware, Stuyvesant
7 Town and Peter Cooper were built by
8 Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to help
9 New York City address the housing needs of
10 military veterans returning to New York after
11 the end of the World War II.

12 Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper
13 Village became a thriving middle-class
14 community of solid taxpaying citizens that
15 helped turn New York City into the greatest
16 city.

17 With hundreds of thousands of
18 households still struggling to recover from
19 the COVID pandemic, including people in
20 Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, any
21 rent increase will be damaging for too many
22 people. A rent increase will have an outsized
23 impact on low-income tenants with 365,000
24 low-income households living in
25 rent-stabilized housing, twice the amount of

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 those living in public and subsidized housing
3 combined.

4 I respectfully request a rent
5 freeze, it is a good course to protect all of
6 our citizens. And remember, our taxpaying
7 citizens are crucial to this city. Thank you
8 for this opportunity to speak.

9 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 We're just waiting for our next
12 speaker to be promoted and we have Pablo
13 Zevallos. You're muted, welcome.

14 MR. ZEVALLOS: Good evening, thank
15 you. My name is Pablo Zevallos, I'm a
16 tenants' rights attorney testifying in support
17 of a rent freeze.

18 The case for rent freeze is
19 straightforward: The rent adjustments that
20 this board has previously ordered for
21 rent-stabilized units have substantially
22 outpaced landlords' inflation-adjusted costs.

23 Between 1990 and 2021, in
24 buildings containing rent-stabilized units,
25 inflation-adjusted income from rent has

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 increased by 38 percent while costs have
3 increased by 32 percent, allowing net
4 operating income to increase by 47 percent.

5 Helping to drive that trend is
6 that according to a data analysis by Tim
7 Collins, the rental increases that prior
8 incarnations of this board have ordered have
9 exceeded the increases necessary to maintain
10 fixed operating costs to rent ratios and
11 inflation adjusted NOI by 32 percent.

12 Indeed these historical rent
13 adjustment orders have enabled the very
14 profiteering the Rent Stabilization Law was
15 enacted to counter. This board can correct
16 course now.

17 Some may posit that inflation
18 (indecipherable) as a result of COVID, justify
19 the increases. Yet this board has not
20 historically pegged its adjustment orders to
21 inflation, including in years where real
22 estate specific costs have been higher than
23 those found for 2021 and the decrease in
24 rental collections in rent-stabilized units,
25 four percent from 2019 to 2020, was modest and

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 NOI was identical in both years.

3 While landlords profits continue
4 to grow and sales of buildings containing
5 rent-stabilized units have rallied, tenant
6 struggles continue to mount. Majority of the
7 lowest income renters pay in turn a majority
8 of their incomes in rent. Fewer than 1 in 100
9 apartments renting in under \$1,500 is vacant
10 and couchers and accompanying fair housing
11 enforcement are in entirely short supply.

12 With these tenants, and still
13 growing landlord profits in mind, I urge this
14 board to adopt a rent freeze. Thank you for
15 the opportunity to testify.

16 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Our next speaker is Ana Reyes.

19 Ana, welcome, we're ready for you.

20 MS. REYES (through interpreter):
21 Good afternoon to everyone. My name is Ana
22 Reyes and I'm a resident of Bayridge in
23 Brooklyn.

24 I'm here to speak to you about the
25 rent increase which would cost tenants our

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 homes. The reason why I'm here to list my
3 voice as a tenants is that every single time
4 you wish to increase the rent, I begin to
5 worry about the common things. I need to
6 worry about -- worrying about eating at least
7 once a day and having enough to be able to pay
8 the amount that landlords are asking for. Or
9 should I not rest as much, not sleep as much
10 and mental peace but my salary of course is
11 not increasing.

12 And the most important thing is
13 that if landlords continue to increase rents,
14 it would be impossible for me to have a home,
15 which of course is the basic that any person
16 desires.

17 Please no more rent increases.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIR REISS: Our next speaker, I
20 just see a phone number ending in 654, you're
21 muted.

22 MS. BURGER: It's Dario Gallo.

23 CHAIR REISS: Say the name again.

24 MS. BURGER: Dario Gallo.

25 CHAIR REISS: You're muted.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 Can you remind people what they
3 need to do to unmute on the phone.

4 MS. BURGER: If you're on the
5 phone, please press star six to unmute
6 yourself.

7 CHAIR REISS: They dropped from
8 the panel.

9 Danielle, do you want to promote
10 somebody else in the interim and we'll try to
11 get Dario back on.

12 MS. GARCIA: I just wanted to
13 flag, David, that I e-mailed you and Andrew
14 some names that are testifying together on a
15 Zoom account on the same Zoom account, just so
16 that it's flagged and they don't get skipped.

17 CHAIR REISS: Okay. And Sheila,
18 are they registered speakers or they are --

19 MS. GARCIA: Correct.

20 CHAIR REISS: Thank you.

21 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: They are
22 registered, which account are they on?

23 MS. GARCIA: Okay, sorry. I just
24 want to make sure that I get -- can I just
25 e-mail you?

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yeah, e-mail me.
3 That was the problem you put the names down
4 and they did preregister, but you didn't put
5 the person's --

6 MS. GARCIA: Okay, I'll put that
7 name.

8 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yeah, thank you.

9 CHAIR REISS: Sorry, our next --
10 Sheila, should I move on to the next speaker?

11 Okay, our next speaker is Hannah
12 Yukon. Welcome, you're muted.

13 MS. YUKON: When we threaten the
14 lives of the people who serve us, who cook for
15 us, who deliver our food, who clean our
16 streets, who teach our kids and create art in
17 New York City that makes New York City what
18 New York City is, we lose the ability to stay
19 connected in truth, love and unity.

20 When we choose the economics,
21 which let's remind each other is a made up
22 construct like time, money and rent because
23 land is free, water is free and air is free,
24 we de-prioritize the lives of the very people
25 who make New York City what it is; a vibrant,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 beautiful, magical place to love and create.

3 As an artist and educator and as
4 an ex-New York City realtor, I've seen my kids
5 go homeless while luxury apartments go up
6 right next to the very schools they attend.
7 These kids are our future and when we threaten
8 their lives and put the safety of their
9 families at risk, you put New York City at
10 risk of losing its magic and vibrancy.

11 The rent increase will affect the
12 most vulnerable communities and going off of
13 book, we already know that this is not
14 anything we already need to, like, write a
15 thing we know this. And I'm speaking from the
16 heart, heart, heart and you know this as well.

17 I'm not calling for a rent freeze.
18 I'm calling for a rent cancelation. Mortgage
19 cancelation. If it takes us to use one of
20 those empty commercial units to come together
21 as a community to talk about how we can use
22 the money off of Wall Street to take
23 50 percent off of brokerage commissions to put
24 that back into the pockets of the people who
25 are making New York City what it is.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 These are solutions. We can talk
3 all we want, but we need solutions. And they
4 are out there. That's the thing, the
5 solutions are out there. It takes all of us
6 together.

7 Thank you for this platform to
8 talk and find these solutions as well. I
9 don't know where my time is up, I'm going to
10 keep going until the bell goes off.

11 I wanted to make a song because I
12 feel like connecting us back to the human
13 parts of what this is, is really going to make
14 New York City and homelessness and the plastic
15 production entirely -- (timer).

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 Our next person to be promoted,
20 I'm not sure if someone -- I hear some little
21 background noise, if someone thinks they may
22 need to be muted they may want to do that.
23 I'm not sure who it is.

24 So I just hear some whispering and
25 I'll just take the time to remind people if

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 you can speak a little slowly, that will be of
3 great assistance to our interpreters who have
4 to kind of simultaneously process what you're
5 saying and then translate it into another
6 language. So we all need to make an effort in
7 that regard, so just a reminder.

8 And I think our next speaker is --
9 your camera's on but you are muted and we're
10 ready for you but you are -- you're all good
11 to go. Welcome.

12 MR. FENG (through interpreter):
13 (Inaudible).

14 CHAIR REISS: We're not hearing
15 you. I'm not sure, still no sound. I think
16 we had sound at some point, it's just not
17 picking up.

18 MS. GARCIA: If you joined using
19 your computer and you didn't join the sound,
20 you're going to have to rejoin or activate it
21 by clicking the little arrow next to the mute
22 going to the mic and seeing if it will allow
23 you to select the mic there.

24 CHAIR REISS: Andrew, maybe it
25 also makes sense to promote someone else in

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 the interim and then if there's a technical
3 issue we can take the next person and they
4 could work on their technical issue from their
5 end.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay.

7 MS. BURGER: Mark Levine is here.

8 CHAIR REISS: Mr. Feng, is it okay
9 try speaking now?

10 MR. FENG: Hello.

11 CHAIR REISS: Yes, we can hear you
12 now.

13 MR. FENG (through interpreter):
14 (Inaudible).

15 MS. GARCIA: I'm so sorry to
16 interrupt, we can't hear the interpretation.
17 Can the interpreter get closer to the mic so
18 that we can hear what is being translated?

19 CHAIR REISS: We can hear
20 Mr. Feng, but we can't hear the interpreter.

21 MR. FENG (through interpreter):
22 We lived in this district for more than
23 28 years (indecipherable.)

24 THE INTERPRETER: Can you hear us
25 now?

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: The interpreter is
3 very faint. We can hear you but we can't
4 really hear you well.

5 THE INTERPRETER: Is this better?

6 CHAIR REISS: It's better.

7 MR. FENG (through interpreter):

8 In the time that I have lived in my apartment,
9 I have seen my rent double and all that I
10 asked is that (indecipherable) two percent in
11 the next two years.

12 An increase (indecipherable).
13 Because we are already retired. Thank you for
14 letting me testify.

15 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 Are we going to Borough President
18 Levine next? Is that -- am I getting that
19 right?

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yes.

21 CHAIR REISS: Borough President,
22 welcome, you're muted and your camera's off.

23 BP LEVINE: Okay. Can you hear
24 me?

25 CHAIR REISS: I can hear you. I

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 don't see you in case you want to be on
3 camera.

4 BP LEVINE: Let's see if I can fix
5 that, I may have a technical issue with the
6 camera and I would hate to hold you up for
7 that reason. Would it be okay if I proceeded
8 without the camera or do you want me to take a
9 few minutes to fix that?

10 CHAIR REISS: It's your choice.
11 We're more than happy just to listen.

12 BP LEVINE: Okay. If you don't
13 mind, we'll do that. Apologies for being off
14 camera, but grateful for the chance to speak
15 to all of you. So can I begin?

16 CHAIR REISS: Yes, please.
17 Welcome.

18 BP LEVINE: Wonderful.

19 Well. Thank you, Chair Reiss. My
20 name again is Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough
21 President, and I'm speaking on behalf of my
22 fellow Manhattan colleagues; Council members
23 Powers, Abreu, Menin, Rivera, Bottcher, Ayala,
24 Marte, and De La Rosa.

25 I'd like to thank you and members

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 of the Board for this opportunity to testify
3 this evening.

4 We're testifying today to ask that
5 the Rent Guidelines Board fairly weigh the
6 challenges brought upon tenants across the
7 City by the pandemic as well as the tenuous
8 nature of our economic recovery in any
9 decision regarding potential increases and
10 rent for stabilized units. This is not the
11 time to increase rents for rent-stabilized
12 tenants and it is our strong belief that there
13 should be no increase.

14 It's our understanding that the
15 Board is considering a two to four percent
16 increase for one-year leases and four to
17 six percent increases for two-year leases in
18 rent-stabilized units largely due to concerns
19 regarding rising costs for property owners.

20 We agree that these concerns must
21 be taken into account by the Board and that it
22 is not the board's responsibility to
23 unilaterally make housing affordable
24 irrespective of the cost incurred by owners to
25 maintain it. However, over the past three

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 decades, the Board has authorized rent
3 increases that far exceeded what would have
4 otherwise been required to keep pace with
5 building operating costs and inflation.

6 Though the Board has issued
7 guidelines that have been lower in recent
8 years, the long-term gains enjoyed by property
9 owners is still far beyond what may have been
10 required to maintain and operate their
11 property.

12 Furthermore, it's unclear whether
13 concern for increasing costs of operating and
14 managing property, an increase of 4.2 percent
15 according to the Board, is accurate. It's our
16 understanding that little has been done to
17 determine whether the price index of operating
18 costs, the so-called PIOC, is correct.

19 The age and condition of the
20 housing stock plays a vital role in the
21 operating and management.

22 (Timer.)

23 Am I able to continue? I
24 apologize, I realize --

25 CHAIR REISS: If you take a few

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 seconds to finish up, we'd be grateful.

3 BP LEVINE: Okay. Fair enough.
4 I'll try and summarize the rest of my remarks,
5 I appreciate it Chair Reiss.

6 Our position is that the analysis
7 of the PIOC is now far out of date because the
8 last audits were conducted 30 years ago and we
9 are also aware of the escalating number of
10 actions by tenants in New York City civil
11 courts, HP actions, seeking orders to repair
12 which does suggest that owners are in fact
13 ignoring obligations for maintenance.

14 And finally, the timing is
15 critical in that New York City is still coming
16 out of the pandemic with lives and livelihoods
17 so terribly disrupted across the five boroughs
18 with real economic hardship, lost income and
19 many jobs that have not yet been recovered
20 even at this stage in the pandemic.

21 And we're acutely aware of the
22 large number of housing court cases currently
23 active, over 75,000 in housing court with
24 7,000 new cases filed every month.

25 So because of this, because of the

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 terrible crisis in homelessness, we are
3 requesting as a group myself and my City
4 Council colleagues that there be a rent freeze
5 which we believe would be most appropriate at
6 this time.

7 So thank you for bearing with my
8 technical difficulties and allowing me a
9 little extra time. I'll pass it back to you,
10 Mr. Chair.

11 CHAIR REISS: Thank you, Borough
12 President. Thank you for your testimony.

13 And we're just waiting for our
14 next speaker to be promoted.

15 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: She's there,
16 Maggie Sanchez.

17 CHAIR REISS: I'm sorry, I didn't
18 see it.

19 Thank you, Ms. Sanchez. We're
20 ready for you. We can hear you, I believe,
21 but we don't see you in case you want to turn
22 on your camera.

23 MS. SANCHEZ: No, that's okay.

24 Hi. So according to the Coalition
25 For the Homeless, as of January 2022,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 approximately 48,413 city residents were
3 homeless including 15,057 children.

4 As a domestic violence survivor, I
5 know what it is like to be unhoused. I know
6 what it is like to end up in a domestic
7 violence shelter along with my child who is
8 diagnosed with autism. This means that the --
9 according to the members, this means that 50
10 -- almost 20,000 single adults slept in
11 shelters each night in January 2022 which is a
12 near record.

13 The increases that were voted on
14 are unattainable for tenants like me. If
15 property taxes and other issues are the
16 problem for owners, putting more tens of
17 thousands of families just like me out in the
18 street does not solve this problem.

19 The two and -- two and
20 four percent for the year increase and four
21 and six percent two-year increase or more,
22 even eight percent, does not -- it is just
23 unattainable with all of the inflation and all
24 of the costs and all the costs around the City
25 that are right now happening.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 So there is no way for tenants
3 like me to pay that so what is going to be the
4 solution to that? The Board must consider
5 this. The Board must consider -- (timer).

6 Okay, thank you.

7 CHAIR REISS: Thank you so much
8 for your time and your testimony.

9 We're just waiting for the next
10 person to be promoted. And I'll take this as
11 an opportunity to actually -- a number of our
12 speakers have spoken in a very reasonable
13 pace, which is great and those of us who are a
14 little hyperactive in their speaking, just
15 remember the interpreters are trying to keep
16 up with us as we speak so please keep that in
17 mind while you present your testimony.

18 We're waiting for them to be
19 promoted, that's why there's silence if you're
20 just listening in.

21 Just reporting in, we're just
22 waiting for -- oh, wait, I see someone. We
23 have Spencer Garcia, welcome. You're ready to
24 go. We can hear you and see you, welcome.

25 MS. GARCIA: Thank you. My name

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 is Spencer Garcia, I'm a lifelong New Yorker
3 and I'm currently living in a rent-stabilized
4 apartment in Kew Gardens, Queens.

5 I'm asking the Rent Guidelines
6 Board to vote for a rent freeze. I'm asking
7 for a rent freeze because any rent increase
8 will force hundreds of thousands of New
9 Yorkers out of their homes and force hundreds
10 of thousands more to forego paying for food,
11 medical care and other necessities in order to
12 pay for their rent.

13 365,000 low-income households live
14 in rent-stabilized housing, twice the amount
15 who live in public and subsidized housing
16 combined. Any rent increases will directly
17 lead to evictions, homelessness and death.
18 People will die if they can no longer afford
19 the food or medication they need to survive,
20 if they are forced to move into a crowded
21 shelter and contract COVID, or if they freeze
22 or sweat to death from living on the streets.

23 This death is completely
24 avoidable. Nobody should have to pay over
25 30 percent of their income on rent and yet

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 over half of New Yorkers are rent burdened.

3 Amidst the ongoing pandemic and
4 ever-increasing inflation, the number of rent
5 burdened New Yorkers continues to increase.

6 Personally, my rent is over
7 40 percent of my monthly income. I spent over
8 two and a half months looking for my current
9 apartment because I could only afford to pay
10 so much on rent without getting into a
11 situation where I would become financially
12 unstable or housing insecure. If I was not
13 living in a rent-stabilized apartment, I would
14 not have been able to afford a studio
15 apartment in Kew Gardens let alone most areas
16 of Queens or New York City as a whole.

17 We have gotten to a place where
18 people from New York can barely afford to stay
19 here and freezing rent will help keep New
20 Yorkers in their homes.

21 Lastly, hundreds of thousands, if
22 not millions, of New York City households are
23 still dealing with the ramification of the
24 ongoing pandemic, people have experienced
25 unemployment, lost of income due to death of a

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 family member, personal disability and
3 inability to work due to long COVID and many
4 more extremely difficult financial situations.
5 With no end in sight of the pandemic, New
6 Yorkers will continue to struggle to pay rent
7 and afford their basic needs.

8 A two percent increase is too much
9 for New York City tenants. Any rent increase
10 is too much for New York City tenants. This
11 is why I'm asking you to vote for a rent
12 freeze.

13 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
14 testimony.

15 We're just waiting for our next
16 speaker to be promoted.

17 And I have the speaker, I just
18 have a first name, Denise. And Denise, you're
19 muted and you're not on camera if you want to
20 be on camera.

21 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: We believe
22 someone has a watch party that has four people
23 who preregistered to speak with them. So if
24 that's the case, please let us know.

25 CHAIR REISS: All right. Yes, we

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 can see you and I think we can hear you. I'm
3 not sure yet if I can hear you, you're not
4 muted though so that's good. I think I'm
5 hearing you.

6 DENISE: I registered my members.

7 MS. GARCIA: So make sure that
8 each person says their name and then just
9 testifies and we can just move through them.

10 DENISE: Okay.

11 CHAIR REISS: Welcome, we look
12 forward to your testimony.

13 MS. JUAREZ (through interpreter):
14 Good evening, I live on Grant Street. I want
15 to thank you for this opportunity for tenants
16 like myself that could not appear in person.

17 I wanted to share my concerns
18 regarding the increase in rent. I ask for
19 there not to be an increase in rent this year
20 because there are many tenants like myself
21 that are barely recovering from the pandemic.
22 The pandemic isn't over emotionally and
23 financially.

24 Personally, my husband got ill --
25 became ill at the beginning of the pandemic

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 and he did not work until the end of the year.
3 I had to ask for -- to borrow money in order
4 to survive and until today I haven't paid back
5 the money that I borrowed in order to pay my
6 rent for me not to be evicted with my
7 children.

8 My daughter insists that we would
9 have been evicted and because of her I felt I
10 had to look for the money to pay my rent. I
11 would not want to go through something similar
12 again. That's why I hope you hear us and you
13 do not increase the rent this year. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIR REISS: Did we get the name
16 of the speaker?

17 MS. JUAREZ: Claudia Juarez.

18 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
19 testimony.

20 MS. ROSERO (through interpreter):
21 My name is Luz Rosero. I'm an active member
22 in my community and my community organization
23 in where we fight against displacement and
24 tenant harassment within our community. I
25 would like to thank the Board for the

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 opportunity to have a virtual hearing for the
3 tenants like myself who could not appear in
4 person.

5 As a tenant I'm asking the Board
6 to please not increase for the reason that
7 there are so many people right now because of
8 this pandemic, we don't have work and no
9 increase in salaries. There's many people
10 that are ill and there are people that are
11 alone.

12 Me, personally, I live off my
13 social security that I don't make enough for
14 the increase that you plan on doing.

15 First of all, we are all, because
16 of this pandemic, and on top of that you
17 adding an increase, we don't have enough.

18 The property owners, they are
19 asking, and they have, and even they have ten
20 buildings and they have apartments where they
21 are charging and other apartments are too
22 expensive. They say that they are losing an
23 apartment but that's a lie because in one
24 building they have more than ten apartments
25 and how much is each apartment worth when they

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 rent it? I don't think that's a loss.

3 Now they are using buildings that
4 they have them vacant so that later on they
5 can say that they are losing money and what do
6 they do then? They rent them at a higher
7 price.

8 I'm asking the Board please, and
9 the legislators here in the city, to support
10 us and for you to see to look to help the poor
11 people, not the leader.

12 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
13 testimony.

14 MS. MIRAMON (through interpreter):
15 Hello. My name is Catalina Miramon and I live
16 at 196 Yuron for 25 years. I would like to
17 say that in these 25 years that I have been
18 living there, I have seen many changes. Good
19 ones and bad ones.

20 Like for example, the area is
21 safer now than before. When I go out, I no
22 longer see fights like I did 25 years ago;
23 that's something good.

24 But I also want to tell you that
25 in the same token, they have made new

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 buildings and with these buildings the rent
3 has increased incredibly, it has gone up
4 triple.

5 Where I live, I live in a
6 rent-controlled apartment, but in the
7 buildings that are across the street and the
8 sides, the rents are extremely expensive that
9 I'm thinking I would never be able to pay
10 them.

11 And something else that's really
12 sad, many people that live there had to move
13 because of the actual increase in rent.
14 Relatives had to leave because their rent was
15 increased extremely high. So for a person
16 it's very difficult to pay that.

17 I also want to tell you something
18 very personal that because the pandemic that
19 we lived through, my husband became ill and he
20 is still ill; it's been six months that he has
21 not worked. So for me it's very difficult if
22 that increase occurred I wouldn't be able to
23 pay rent. I start thinking where am I going
24 to go? Things are very difficult now and I
25 cannot pay more. Thank you.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 MS. AGUILAR (through interpreter):
5 Good afternoon. My name is Teresita Aguilar,
6 I live at 391 Lorimer Street for the last
7 37 years; it's in Brooklyn, New York. I'm an
8 active member of Humanity First -- an
9 organization -- a community organization
10 that's in Williamsburg and Greenpoint as an
11 organization that fights for the community.

12 I wanted to thank the Board for
13 this opportunity to have -- for having a
14 virtual option for tenants like myself that
15 could not attend in person. I would like to
16 share, as an active member of the
17 organization, I have seen the situation of the
18 landlords against the tenants and because of
19 that, I'm asking this honorable board to not
20 increase the rents so that the tenants have
21 more time to deal with the consequences of the
22 pandemic, and for one year for it to be a
23 zero percent increase.

24 The increase that the landlords
25 are asking for is exaggerated and they don't

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 do repairs and they only pressure and they
3 want to leave apartments empty. The landlords
4 lie when they say that they are justifying
5 their increases because of the high cost of
6 maintenance knowing -- full knowing that the
7 budgets and the -- the losses are due to the
8 empty apartments and closed up apartments
9 while people are suffering in the streets
10 because there's no housing. Thank you.

11 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
12 testimony.

13 DENISE: Thank you. Those are all
14 the speakers.

15 CHAIR REISS: All right. I think
16 we're going to move on to -- thank you,
17 Denise.

18 We're going to move on to Sarah
19 McDaniel-Dyer who is muted and not on camera.
20 If you want to be on camera, Sarah. You're
21 still muted, just FYI.

22 MS. MCDANIEL-DYER: Hi. Sorry,
23 I'm on my way home from work. Okay.

24 I'm Sarah McDaniel-Dyer and I've
25 lived in my apartment in Inwood for 15 years.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 The only reason I've been able to keep my
3 apartment is because it's stabilized. We need
4 to recon with the fact that minimum wage in
5 this city is \$13.20 an hour and that's a
6 smidgen above \$100 a day.

7 Let's say my rent goes up \$50, I
8 know it doesn't sound like a lot but that's
9 half a week's groceries for a family of two;
10 that's one can of baby formula for a special
11 needs new born; and it's another half a day
12 you have to work if you make minimum wage.
13 What does the City get from that extra \$50 a
14 month?

15 If you want a neighborhood to
16 thrive you need long-term tenants, you need
17 families and we're making it impossible for
18 people to stay here.

19 Last weekend I had to help the
20 last of my original neighborhood friends pack
21 up to move to Pennsylvania where she will get
22 a four-bedroom house for less than her
23 one-bedroom here.

24 I really, really want to raise my
25 child in New York but I'm middle class and I

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 honestly don't know if we can financially do
3 it. Everyone I know who's had a child has
4 moved out of the state because it costs too
5 much to live here.

6 Who benefits from these rent
7 increases when we know almost everyone is rent
8 burdened? Why do we continue to give money to
9 people who give us culturally and tangibly
10 nothing in return?

11 I haven't had a pay increase since
12 before the pandemic, why should my landlord
13 get one? If he needed the money so badly, why
14 doesn't he just rent out the apartment on the
15 first floor that's been open since my neighbor
16 died in 2020.

17 This isn't about landlord needs,
18 it's about their agreed.

19 Shit that made New York one of the
20 best cities on the planet is people like Patti
21 Smith who could pay their rent with a painting
22 before anyone knew their name. If you want to
23 keep New York alive, you need to keep it
24 affordable. Roll the rents back. That's all
25 I got, thank you.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
3 testimony. Our next speaker is Nova Lucero.

4 You're not on camera if you would
5 like to be on camera.

6 MS. LUCERO (through interpreter):
7 My name is Nova Lucero, I'm also a tenant
8 testifying this evening for the issue of rent.

9 The majority of people that are
10 testifying are tenants because the impact of
11 these RGB decisions are worse for tenants than
12 homeowners because at least they could sell it
13 and they don't make much money, but tenants
14 cannot move out as easily.

15 The rent is high and because of
16 that reason there's many people that are
17 homeless. In my neighborhood I see all the
18 change ever since the pandemic started until
19 now since there was a time where there was no
20 evicting but the owners were still doing it.
21 And all the RGB members know it. It doesn't
22 matter where you live, all the many more
23 people homeless before -- than before.

24 Our neighbors are on the streets,
25 they are depressed, they are sick and

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 everything because of the stress for their
3 jobs and for losing their homes. As tenants,
4 we are the workers, we are the essential
5 workers of this city and without us, it
6 wouldn't be the city. Please don't raise the
7 rents. Thank you.

8 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
9 testimony.

10 MS. BURGER: David, can I make a
11 quick comment?

12 CHAIR REISS: Yes.

13 MS. BURGER: For the people in
14 attendance, when you -- if you preregistered,
15 it was noted to you that the name that you
16 provided in your registration has to match the
17 name that you sign in to Zoom with. We have a
18 lot of people today that preregistered that
19 were not finding in the attendee list. It may
20 be because we can't find you because your name
21 is different.

22 I would suggest if you think
23 that's the case, that you sign out -- that you
24 sign completely out of the Zoom, you might be
25 sharing that account with another person, and

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 sign back in with the name that you registered
3 with. We have no other way to find you if the
4 name is different.

5 At the end of the hearing, if
6 there's time we will open it up to
7 unregistered speakers and then you would have
8 a chance to also speak. But if you have
9 registered and you think you've been passed,
10 you might want to consider that.

11 (Whereupon, the above announcement
12 was translated into Spanish.)

13 CHAIR REISS: Our next speaker is
14 Sarah Lazur. Sarah, you're muted and you're
15 not on camera if you want to be on camera.

16 MS. LAZUR: Hi, sorry about that.

17 CHAIR REISS: No worries.

18 MS. LAZUR: Okay. Hi, my name is
19 Sarah Lazur, I live on St. Mark's Avenue in
20 Brooklyn and like thousands of New Yorkers
21 that lost their jobs during the pandemic and
22 have gotten work, it's less than before and my
23 rent burden is now 60 percent of my income.

24 I'm one of the lucky people in my
25 neighborhood because my previous job paid

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 okay, I had a retirement account and I know
3 I'll recover eventually but the pandemic was a
4 huge setback. I'd never been on unemployment
5 before in my life, I spent my savings on rent
6 and utilities and the cumulative effects also
7 mean down the road that I'll have to -- I'm
8 going to have to retire a year or two later,
9 if not more.

10 And like so many of my neighbors,
11 my whole life has taken a rollback and I think
12 it's only right for the rent to rollback to
13 compensate for the hardship this pandemic has
14 placed on middle-class, working-class and poor
15 New Yorkers alike.

16 Rent-stabilized tenants don't have
17 assets to refinance or sell off when
18 catastrophe hits and for decades, they have
19 been enriching landlords, the vast majority of
20 whom have multiple properties giving them
21 continuous profits even in times of economic
22 crisis.

23 As a member of the Crown Heights
24 Tenant Union, I have seen dozens of rent
25 histories and they show how the system has

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 been stacked against us. Our rents are
3 already inflated not only because of past RGB
4 votes, but also because landlords harass
5 countless previous tenants out of their homes
6 racking up 20 percent vacancy bonuses
7 eventually deregulating half the neighborhood
8 and that's not even including the rampant
9 fraud we find in our rent histories.

10 Lastly, many landlords in Crown
11 Heights took out huge mortgages on their
12 buildings based on a business model of
13 displacement and deregulation and now that
14 HSTPA has taken away the most egregious
15 loopholes, these landlords are asking you to
16 force their tenants to pay for their unwise
17 gambles in the past while those tenants are
18 struggling to see any future stability at all.
19 And that's why these landlords' complaints of
20 economic hardship right now are kind of
21 offensive.

22 So we need a nine percent rent
23 rollback to -- at least to even begin to do
24 right by New York City tenants. Thank you.

25 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 testimony.

3 Our next speaker is Michael
4 Perles. Michael, you're muted and not on
5 camera if you want to be on camera. Okay, we
6 got you. Please let's hear your testimony.

7 MR. PERLES: Can you hear me?

8 CHAIR REISS: Yeah.

9 MR. PERLES: Great. Okay. Hi,
10 thanks. My name is Mike Perles, I'm a
11 rent-stabilized tenant and I don't currently
12 have a lease because my landlord is refusing
13 to renew my lease. He waited about six months
14 to renew my lease when the rent increase was
15 higher than when I showed him DHCR fact sheet
16 number four that said I was entitled to a rent
17 increase that was applicable the day after my
18 lease expired. He has ignored me.

19 He's known me for the past year
20 and I've been without a lease even though I'm
21 entitled to one as a rent-stabilized tenant.

22 So I just want to quickly show a
23 few photos of the inside of my apartment.
24 This is this morning at 11:55 a.m., this is a
25 cockroach the size of about my thumb.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 Here's a cockroach on my stairwell
3 about the size of my finger, I'm not sure if
4 you can see that.

5 This is the window behind me, you
6 can see a crack in my window frame that goes
7 to the outside of my apartment building.

8 This is a pipe, you can't see that
9 to the left of me, the ceiling is crumbling
10 down.

11 This is my kitchen floor.

12 And so it's interesting that we're
13 talking about this threshold wherein once we
14 magically pass it, landlords will start
15 improving our buildings. I know for a fact
16 that's not going to happen. If my rent
17 increase is 20 percent, my landlord's not
18 fixing my building. My upstairs neighbor is a
19 market-rate tenant, they pay about twice what
20 I pay and they have a roach infestation.

21 So what is this magical increase
22 number where landlords are going to start
23 making improvements? You know, I just want
24 people on the Board whose vote affects a
25 million households to know that you're not

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 voting on whether or not landlords are going
3 to make improvements to their buildings --
4 like I said, they are not going to do that --
5 you're voting on a single parent staying an
6 hour later at work being away from their
7 families an hour longer to make ends meet.

8 You're -- 1,350 babies in the past
9 year were born in the hospital and went
10 directly to a homeless shelter and so those
11 two things are not equivalent. Children --
12 children being born into homeless shelters and
13 Eric Ulrich, you know, having some extra money
14 to go golfing.

15 So if you think those two are
16 equivalent, you should vote for a rent
17 increase. If you don't think those two are
18 equivalent, you should vote for a rent
19 rollback or at the very least a rent freeze.
20 Thank you so much.

21 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
22 testimony.

23 Our next speaker is Lyric
24 Thompson. Welcome, we can see you but you're
25 currently muted.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 MS. THOMPSON: Thank you. Can you
3 hear me?

4 CHAIR REISS: Yes, we can.

5 MS. THOMPSON: Hi. Good evening,
6 everyone. Thank you so much for allowing me
7 the opportunity to testify.

8 I am in a rent-stabilized
9 apartment that is stabilized pursuant to the
10 421a section of the Real Property Tax Law.
11 Now my apartment and my building was not
12 properly registered, the landlord lied for the
13 first six years of my tenancy. In fact, I
14 only learned that we were subject to
15 stabilization after he evicted one tenant on a
16 holdover and another tenant came to me
17 concerned that he was going through the
18 building, which he was.

19 We've had to deal with DHCR for
20 seven years, it's been problematic and
21 traumatic to say the least. Coming out of
22 this pandemic, I'm just going to be blunt,
23 people cannot afford this. You cannot get
24 blood from a stone. So what's going to happen
25 is people are going to lose their homes.

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1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 Now I am not unsympathetic to
3 small owners, I would be more than happy to
4 petition the City Council as well as the
5 assembly and state senate to create a program
6 for small owners to cover their extra expenses
7 if needs be. But displacing millions of New
8 Yorkers is not the answer and to do this
9 coming out of a pandemic, I mean, I have to
10 ask, are you insane? I mean, where do you
11 think people are going to get this money?
12 Honestly, where? Selling blood plasma, maybe.
13 I mean, how much do you get for a pint of
14 plasma? And how often can you donate?

15 I mean, these are the questions
16 that you need to be asking yourself when you
17 ask for a six percent rent increase from
18 people that are already financially burdened
19 and devastated due to the past two years of
20 COVID. And let's not pretend it's over,
21 people, it's not. It's not.

22 You know, we need to start
23 evolving our thoughts on landlord in the first
24 place. I mean, housing is a human right.
25 Every living being is entitled to have a place

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 to lay their head at night. Now the question
3 you need to ask yourselves is do you want that
4 to be in a home or do you want it to be under
5 the bridge or at the metro or in a shelter?
6 It's up to you.

7 I ask for a rent freeze or
8 rollback and that's all I have to say. Thank
9 you so much for your time and have a nice
10 evening.

11 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
12 testimony.

13 Our next speaker is Jennifer
14 Epstein. Jennifer, you're muted.

15 MS. EPSTEIN: Hi. Good evening,
16 can you hear me?

17 CHAIR REISS: Yes, we can. Thank
18 you.

19 MS. EPSTEIN: Thank you very much
20 for taking the time this evening.

21 I've lived in my current apartment
22 in Brooklyn for almost ten years, it's always
23 been a struggle being a single-income
24 household to keep up with the rent paycheck to
25 paycheck but I've managed and I've never

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 missed a month's rent before.

3 The proposed rent hikes will
4 change everything, I'll be wiped out
5 completely and forced to move out of New York
6 to another state entirely. The cost of living
7 in New York, stagnant wages and inflation
8 alone, in my opinion and I know other tenants
9 on this call feel the same way, is wildly out
10 of step with these proposed rent hikes. I
11 mean, especially during COVID, these hikes are
12 quite candidly inhumane; it'll be forcing
13 hundreds of thousands of rent-stabilized
14 tenants out of their homes displaced with
15 nowhere else to go.

16 And I really think that a rent
17 freeze or a rent rollback is the right thing
18 to do. If we're really looking at a
19 compromise, then I would say zero percent for
20 one and one percent for two.

21 I also, like a lot of tenants on
22 this call, I am not seeing where the -- what
23 building maintenance is going on that
24 landlords are discussing. I have not, the
25 only maintenance or improvements that I've

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 seen are on individual apartment units that
3 are -- have construction going on to increase
4 rents.

5 I have not seen any maintenance on
6 my building. The heat is on when it's
7 70 degrees and off when it's 20 degrees, so
8 I'm just not sure what this is in reference
9 to.

10 But I know that I speak for other
11 tenants on this call that this would really
12 change our lives if these rent increases go
13 through. Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
15 testimony. Our next speaker is Susi Schropp.
16 Do I have your name properly?

17 MS. SCHROPP: Yes, that's correct.

18 CHAIR REISS: We look forward to
19 your testimony.

20 MS. SCHROPP: Okay. My name is
21 Susi Schropp, I'm a rent-stabilized tenant in
22 the East Village. My brother and I have lived
23 in our apartment for 32 years. I'm still
24 trying to bounce back from the COVID economic
25 depression where I lost 76 percent of my

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 income.

3 I work in the creative industry
4 and while New York real estate is on fire, we
5 ordinary people are still struggling. I live
6 a very frugal lifestyle, rarely go shopping
7 and get everything from free online community
8 listings. Sometimes I qualify for Snap but
9 not always.

10 My healthcare does not cover the
11 care I need, especially dental care. Last
12 year I visited my family for the first time in
13 seven years. They chipped in to help with
14 travel expenses. Sometimes I consider
15 becoming a freak where I get almost expired
16 but still edible food from dumpsters for free.

17 I also started working as a CUNY
18 adjunct, I get paid for four to seven contact
19 hours per week for a 20- to 30-hour week,
20 weekly workload; a meager income.

21 I empathize with the small
22 landlords and believe they should receive
23 subsidies from the state as even double digit
24 increases would only be a drop in the bucket
25 for them.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 My landlords are the Shalom family
3 who collectively own almost 150 rental
4 buildings in New York City, the majority of
5 them deregulated. The market -- the market is
6 as hot as ever for them.

7 This year's proposed hefty rent
8 increase will add to my growing hardship of
9 over 50 percent rent burden. I urge the Board
10 to reconsider and allow working New Yorkers
11 like me more time to recover through a
12 rollback or a zero percent increase. Thank
13 you for your undivided attention.

14 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 Our next speaker, we're waiting
17 for someone to be promoted. Here we go.

18 Diane Stein, Diane your camera is
19 not on and you're muted. Okay, you're unmuted
20 and your camera's on. Welcome.

21 MS. STEIN: Hi. Can you hear me?

22 CHAIR REISS: We can.

23 MS. STEIN: Thank you. My name is
24 Diane Stein, I live in Independence Plaza, a
25 former Mitchell-Lama rental located in

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Tribeca.

3 When our landlords took us out of
4 the program, we were not covered under rent
5 stabilization. Stellar Management is our
6 landlord, they are not a small mom-and-pop
7 landlord, they own several complexes not just
8 in New York but nationally.

9 There are several hundred tenants
10 that are stabilized through an agreement with
11 the landlord that mimics rent stabilization,
12 so the rises and falls according to the
13 guidelines. These are people who helped build
14 the neighborhood; we built schools, parks,
15 grocery stores, other amenities that now make
16 Tribeca a desirable place to live and we
17 stayed and we helped each other through 9/11,
18 Superstorm Sandy and now COVID. We're still
19 active in our community and we vote.

20 The market-rate tenants are not
21 able to stay here because the landlord can
22 raise the rents to help whatever they want and
23 they are not even obligated to opt to renew
24 their leases. So our once tight-knit
25 community has become more transient and the

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 neighborhood has become more gentrified. The
3 original tenants are being pushed out. This
4 is a loss to the City and to humanity. I feel
5 like we are being discarded.

6 I'm asking for a rent rollback or
7 if not a rent rollback then a rent freeze.
8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

9 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
10 testimony. We're just waiting for someone to
11 be promoted. And we have Samantha Bravo.
12 You're camera is off and you're muted. There
13 we go, we can see you and hear you.

14 MS. BRAVO: My name is Samantha
15 Bravo and I am with Neighbors Helping
16 Neighbors.

17 First off, I want to express my
18 extreme disappointment towards Mayor Adams for
19 not holding in-person hearings in Brooklyn
20 despite being the Brooklyn Borough President
21 for eight years.

22 Now my question to all of you is
23 why should there be a rent increase when most
24 tenants live in poverty and in bad living
25 conditions? I do not understand why my

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 parents and other tenants should be paying
3 more in rent when our landlords are abusive
4 and our apartments need repairs. It is not
5 right to raise rent prices when gas is at an
6 all-time high and basic essentials are
7 increasing as well such as food. We need a
8 rollback of rent because tenants cannot afford
9 to pay more rent.

10 My mother is one of many New York
11 tenants who work at a job that does not pay
12 enough to handle hundreds of dollars more of
13 rent. Many of you can easily vote against
14 tenants without experiencing the impact that
15 your vote has on low-income minority tenants.
16 It is easy for you to vote to increase rent
17 while going to bed and sleeping peacefully.

18 If you are voting to increase
19 rent, you are voting for more people on the
20 streets. If you are voting to increase rent,
21 you are voting for more people to mentally and
22 physically work themselves to exhaustion. If
23 you are voting to increase rent, you are
24 supporting abusive landlords and inhumane
25 living conditions.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 Though it is never the right time
3 to increase rent, we are still in the pandemic
4 and people still need time to get back on
5 their feet. Please do not vote for a rent
6 increase, vote for a rent decrease or for a
7 rent freeze. Thank you for listening and have
8 a good night.

9 MS. GARCIA: Shout out to you
10 Samantha for testifying since being super
11 young and seeing you throughout the years and
12 I'm apologizing for the fact that you have to
13 testify every year for your parents and for
14 your community. So thank you.

15 CHAIR REISS: Our next speaker is
16 Michele Jackson. Welcome.

17 MS. JACKSON: Hi. Can everyone
18 hear me from the Board?

19 CHAIR REISS: Yes, we can.

20 MS. JACKSON: Perfect, okay. I'm
21 ready for the timer to go up.

22 CHAIR REISS: Sure.

23 MS. JACKSON: Thank you. Hi, good
24 evening. Once again, I'm here tonight to urge
25 the Board to vote for rent freeze.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 I'm a lifelong New Yorker, I'm
3 also a lawyer and I currently live in Kew
4 Gardens, Queens. I'm a tenant that does
5 actually not live in a rent-stabilized unit,
6 I'm in a Co-Op and I'm currently dealing with
7 my landlord wanting to raise my rent. I got a
8 text message today about it as a matter of
9 fact.

10 This is incredibly stressful, it's
11 negatively impacting my life as we speak. For
12 months I've experienced the uncertainty of not
13 knowing how much my rent would go up, whether
14 and where I may have to move and how that
15 might also impact my ability to get to work.

16 And my type of experience which is
17 not, you know, it's a very common experience
18 and it's exactly why I run protections and
19 rent-stabilized apartments are so necessary in
20 the City.

21 And for the hundreds and thousands
22 of New Yorkers who are low-income and rely on
23 the protections of rent stabilization, any
24 increase in rent is a direct threat to their
25 security, their ability to care for their

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 family and their ability to remain safe given
3 that we are still in a pandemic as many people
4 have mentioned and we're actively in the
5 middle of a surge in cases and we're seeing
6 more and more people become disabled and
7 unable to work.

8 And nothing that I'm talking about
9 right now is merely hypothetical, an increase
10 in rent for New Yorkers has already --
11 increases in rent for New Yorkers has already
12 far exceeded any increases to the average New
13 Yorker salary. I've seen countless friends,
14 loved ones and community members, since I've
15 been here my whole life, be displaced from
16 their neighborhoods and many of those people
17 had no choice but to leave New York entirely
18 and aren't coming back.

19 And I'm also sure the members of
20 the Board are aware of the number of vacant
21 apartments that, you know, are in the city and
22 the fact that that number has skyrocketed
23 since the pandemic's began, the cost of living
24 in the city is unconscionable and the most
25 marginalized New Yorkers have felt and

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 continue to feel that reality.

3 At this point in the evening, I'm
4 sure that the Board has, you know, heard and
5 listened to dozens -- (timer).

6 I'm almost done, I just need a few
7 more seconds.

8 At this point, the Board has heard
9 dozens and dozens of stories of New Yorkers
10 who just want to be able to afford their home.
11 Safe and affordable housing is a human right
12 and that's why I'm again urging the Board for
13 a rent freeze; two percent is two percent too
14 many. Thank you. Have a good evening.

15 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 We're just waiting for our next
18 speaker to be promoted.

19 Still waiting just for those of
20 you who are listening, still waiting for our
21 next speaker to be promoted.

22 And I think we have Nathan Bravo.
23 You're muted and your camera's not on if you
24 want your camera on. Welcome, Nathan.

25 MR. BRAVO: Hi. My name is Nathan

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Bravo and I am a member of Neighbors Helping
3 Neighbors.

4 I'm here to talk about the
5 landlord raising the rent. This is why it
6 matters. When the bank gets higher, our
7 parents will start to work more and us kids
8 will have to do things ourselves and if we
9 can't pay the rent we will get kicked out of
10 our homes. But think about us children.

11 For the landlords like I want to
12 get money and kick you out, but it's not
13 always about the money. Think about us kids
14 like me. My main point is to stop raising the
15 rent. Thank you for listening.

16 CHAIR REISS: Thank you, Nathan.

17 Our next speaker is Sherri Cohen.

18 MS. COHEN: Hi. Thank you for the
19 opportunity to share my story.

20 I have lived in my rent-stabilized
21 apartment, my home, for over eight years now.
22 That is the longest I've lived anywhere in my
23 adult life, that's why it's my home. Without
24 this apartment, I would not be able to live in
25 the City where my family has lived for

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 generations.

3 I used to work at a nonprofit, I
4 loved helping people but my salary was
5 scandalously low, and any nonprofit worker
6 here knows what I'm talking about. I was only
7 able to stay in New York City because of my
8 rent-stabilized apartment.

9 Now I work in education. I love
10 what I do, it pays a bit better but not that
11 much. I kept my job during the pandemic, I
12 was one of the lucky ones, but my salary was
13 cut. It's been restored but with inflation
14 I'm making less now than before the pandemic
15 so tell me how can my rent go up when my
16 salary hasn't? In fact, when my salary has
17 gone down.

18 How am I supposed to pay that?
19 Where's that money going to come from? And
20 others like me, who's going to support the
21 institutions in this city? Who's going to
22 work there? Who's going to get the service
23 jobs done? Who's going to get those
24 administration jobs that get people coming to
25 the City? Where are they all going to go when

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 there's nowhere for us to live?

3 I'm one of the lucky ones, like I
4 said, I still have my job but I'm here today
5 in solidarity with everyone who is trying
6 their damn hardest to stay afloat in this
7 city. A rent freeze, rent freeze. Anything
8 else is unacceptable. Thank you.

9 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 Our next speaker is Nora Huertero.

12 I think we may have lost her.

13 Andrew, I think Nora is not even on the
14 attendee, so maybe we should go to the next
15 speaker as Nora signs back on possibly.

16 MS. GARCIA: She's there, she has
17 her hand raised.

18 CHAIR REISS: Nora, I think you
19 could speak but we don't see you -- welcome,
20 welcome.

21 MS. HUERTERO: Good evening. My
22 name is Nora and I'm a resident of Sunset
23 Park, member of Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

24 I have three kids; one in college,
25 one graduating high school and one in the

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 youngest graduating elementary school. I'm
3 disappointed that there is not in-person
4 testimonies in Brooklyn and the registration
5 close on Monday.

6 Another increase in the rent will
7 be affect me a lot because I will have to work
8 more hours and that means I will spend less
9 time with my kids.

10 The owner of the building has
11 brought us to court more than four times for
12 injustice reason. One of her reasons was that
13 apparently did not sign our lease and the
14 other because we don't -- we did not pay the
15 rent, which is incorrect. She doesn't cash
16 our check in actually say four or five month
17 to cash a check.

18 In January our boilers, once
19 again, broke and we did not have hot water for
20 a whole day. The rent increase will greatly
21 affect New York. Increase we will really
22 affect New York because there already a lot of
23 people in homeless shelters and with the need
24 more people there.

25 Instead raise the rent, there

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 should be a project to solve the housing
3 crisis. Many families need to live with other
4 families in one apartment. Rent is already
5 high and they are trying to change us how to
6 raise rent and pay us without establishing
7 stabilized rent. We are just recovering from
8 the pandemic and inflation.

9 Even the children that are from
10 their parents each day. They need to still be
11 a kid and you should not see how landlords are
12 only think on the building of us. I hope you
13 all vote to increase rent, remember that we
14 now bring anything from this world we go to a
15 better place. Thank you.

16 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Our next speaker is Council Member
19 Brewer. Welcome. You're muted, Council
20 Member.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
22 very much to the Rent Guidelines Board. And I
23 am Gale Brewer and I am Council member for the
24 Upper West Side.

25 Just a couple of things that you

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 know already, which is that I know that the
3 Rent Guidelines Board has, you know,
4 challenge; they want to keep the building
5 owners whole and they want to keep renters
6 from undue rent burden and that's not easy.
7 But you know that rental arrears accrued by
8 New York families is about \$2 billion.

9 Obviously the ERAP program helped
10 because my understanding is there were 336,000
11 applications just to give you a sense of the
12 challenge, 2.4 billion sent to help tenants
13 and to owners. So that shows the challenge.

14 We in our office, we have a
15 monthly Rental For Tenants Workshop and
16 hundreds of people show up, more than ever.
17 We even have attorneys who are willing sit
18 into all hours of the night trying to solve
19 problems. We're all trying to deal with the
20 SCRIE issue, that every single person on SCRIE
21 or DRIE but just so you know the 50,000 versus
22 higher, maybe 60 or 70 as a cutoff, is a
23 challenge. A lot of seniors don't fit into
24 there and they are rent burdened.

25 Obviously the good cause in Albany

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 is not your issue, but it does -- it would
3 help, it's not the law and it didn't pass this
4 year. So we're really up against a wall in
5 trying how do we help all of these rent
6 burdened tenants.

7 I believe also that when the
8 eviction moratorium expired on January 15th of
9 this year, there were 227,000 eviction filings
10 in court as of April 26th. There will be more
11 and obviously if we increase rent
12 stabilization in terms of the rent, all of
13 those folks, one way or another, are going to
14 be rent burdened.

15 So I really do, just like
16 everybody else, as much research as you've
17 done, I strongly support not voting for a rent
18 increase for another year. Freezing the rent
19 as we have in the past. And certainly to
20 continue for the single-room occupancy and the
21 lodging house tenants because they are the
22 most vulnerable residents and there are many
23 of them left.

24 Now I certainly know, and I will
25 hear from all those who have small buildings,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 but I don't want to say I don't think that
3 they should get the increase that would then
4 rent burden others.

5 I also say every year, maybe I'm
6 wrong, but there are so many buildings that
7 have both rent-stabilized or controlled and
8 market and that the market does help curb the
9 challenges that might come from not having
10 enough coming from the rent-stabilized and
11 rent-controlled.

12 So I'm here to urge you, just like
13 everybody else, no rent increase this year.
14 Thank you very much.

15 CHAIR REISS: Thank you, Council
16 member. Our next speaker is Estelita Molina.

17 MS. MOLINA (through interpreter):
18 Good afternoon. My name is Estelita Molina,
19 I'm a member of Neighbors Helping Neighbors.
20 My problem is quite difficult because I've
21 been living for 20 years in a house that's not
22 rent stabilized, it's a private property. So
23 of course the rent is very high, plus whenever
24 increase is proposed for us would be
25 devastating, mainly for me.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 The COVID pandemic left me
3 unemployed, one of my daughters became very
4 ill. My daughter's father passed away. The
5 money we had, we had to sort of gather
6 together. We have not been able to
7 financially recover from that.

8 I'm currently living to Sunset
9 Park, a very poor area, working poor area,
10 which makes less than minimum wage. Majority
11 of people, we cannot aspire to paying rent for
12 a rent-stabilized apartment because it's very
13 difficult for me. Economically at the moment,
14 I'm not in the best of situations and again,
15 I've been living in a house where the small
16 repairs are made by the owner but if we don't
17 want to have, for example, rodents or roaches,
18 we have to do that, we would have to pay for
19 that.

20 In my case and for many of my
21 neighbors that live in this situation, it's
22 very difficult situation. Therefore, we ask
23 that there's no increase or at least there's a
24 freeze on rent so that we can recover from the
25 current situation we're living.

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1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 It's very difficult for many of my
3 neighbors who live or earn a salary, a very
4 basic salary, it's even more difficult for us
5 to be able to purchase groceries, to pay for
6 transportation, pay for clothes and basic
7 necessities for our children.

8 I ask all of you to please help us
9 in this situation. Please freeze the rent,
10 that would be the best for us. Thank you so
11 much.

12 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
13 testimony.

14 Our next speaker is James
15 Neimeister.

16 MR. NEIMEISTER: Can you hear me?
17 Excellent, okay.

18 So thank you. Good evening,
19 Chairman Reiss and members of the Board.
20 Thank you for listening this evening and
21 providing this additional opportunity for New
22 Yorkers to testify before you.

23 My name is James Neimeister, I'm
24 testifying today on behalf of Council member
25 Alexa Aviles who represents Red Hook in Sunset

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Park.

3 For every one of our constituents
4 here today who testifies this evening, I can
5 assure you that there are hundreds of
6 thousands more who are experiencing the same
7 things they are going through and I hope you
8 will take what they have to say seriously, not
9 least speak -- least of all because of the
10 language barriers and the technical barriers
11 they overcame to speak to you today.

12 So, you know, you've already heard
13 from some of our constituents who are, you
14 know, very worried about the possible two to
15 four percent rent increases that the Board has
16 recommended in its preliminary vote. Many are
17 already battling the rising cost of living in
18 New York City, many have fought for years with
19 aggressive landlords for repairs and are still
20 fighting for basic services. Is that fair to
21 hike their rent when they are not getting the
22 services? No.

23 Rent stabilization is the primary
24 anchor of affordability and source of
25 low-income housing here in New York City.

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1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 According to the most recent housing vacancy
3 survey, one in eight tenant families surveyed
4 missed at least one rent payment. One in ten
5 were having difficulty getting food to eat
6 during the pandemic. You know, of those who
7 miss rent about a third are still in arrears
8 as of when the survey was done pretty
9 recently. So rent-regulated tenants are still
10 struggling.

11 Your job as a board is not to
12 listen to the business interests only, not to
13 those who appointed you, but to strike a
14 balance and this year not only do we need at
15 least a rent freeze but a lot of these folks
16 need a rent rollback. They need a rebate.
17 They need repairs.

18 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
19 testimony.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So David, I
21 believe that's who we can locate that
22 preregistered at this point. So I'll ask if
23 there is time remaining, would you like to
24 take testimony from folks?

25 CHAIR REISS: Yeah, I think what

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 we'll do is we'll ask those who are attendees
3 who would like to speak as an unregistered
4 speaker to raise your hand. And I think we're
5 just going to take it from the top down. Does
6 that make sense, Andrew?

7 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yeah, sure. Let
8 me -- I'll just read out how you can raise
9 your hand depending on whatever --

10 CHAIR REISS: And then let's
11 translate that as well.

12 MS. GARCIA: I'm getting some
13 texts about some folks that we skipped are on
14 and so can we figure out who's on and make
15 sure we locate them before we move on to
16 opening?

17 CHAIR REISS: Okay. Sheila, do
18 you -- I'm trying to think, does it make sense
19 to do it verbally or should we do it by e-mail
20 while Andrew is reading out the instructions
21 or what do you think makes the most sense?

22 MS. GARCIA: I can text Andrew and
23 Andrew you can do whatever you need to with
24 it.

25 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Are they on

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 attending as they signed up because we don't
3 see them.

4 MS. GARCIA: I'm only talking to
5 the folks coordinating folks to show up so. I
6 see a Paulette on here. Khadija and they say
7 they are both on.

8 So Paulette, we don't see you,
9 that person listed as that name?

10 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: No, we don't.

11 CHAIR REISS: How do you spell
12 Khadija, with a K or I don't see --

13 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I don't see
14 Khadija either.

15 MS. GARCIA: So folks who are on
16 the line, please text me the names that they
17 are signed on under or the e-mail address so
18 that we can like upgrade them. If not, they
19 are just going to have to raise their hand and
20 go in the order.

21 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: The e-mail
22 address doesn't help actually at this point
23 so...

24 MS. BURGER: But also I don't
25 think we have anyone who preregistered with

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Paulette or Khadija so we don't see them in
3 the attendees and I don't believe we have
4 anyone with that name who preregistered.

5 CHAIR REISS: Well Danielle, I see
6 a Paulette.

7 MS. BURGER: Oh, there is a
8 Paulette. Yes, there is a Paulette.

9 CHAIR REISS: They are not
10 alphabetical but let me take a quick look.

11 Andrew, do you want to read --

12 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Sure.

13 CHAIR REISS: -- the instructions?

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yeah.

15 So for those who didn't have a
16 chance to register in advance, we have some
17 time remaining for additional testimony. If
18 you'd like to testify, please raise your hand
19 to signal your wish to speak.

20 On a desktop computer, click raise
21 hand in the webinar controls or press Alt Y on
22 Windows or Option Y on a Mac.

23 On a smart phone, tap raise hand
24 in the webinar controls.

25 For those joining by telephone,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 you can press star nine to raise your hand and
3 press star nine again to lower.

4 And when you are called on, please
5 remember to limit your testimony to two
6 minutes. Thank you.

7 (Whereupon, the above announcement
8 was translated into Spanish.)

9 CHAIR REISS: Thank you. I'm just
10 going to also make one other reminder which is
11 if you have already spoken, we will not call
12 on you or we -- you cannot testify twice in
13 the same hearing. So I just wanted to remind
14 people about that as well.

15 All right. So Danielle --

16 MS. BURGER: Can you do the
17 Spanish translation for that?

18 (Whereupon, the above announcement
19 was translated into Spanish.)

20 CHAIR REISS: Okay. So Andrew
21 and/or Danielle, are we going to start
22 promoting the people who have raised their
23 hands?

24 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yes, I believe.

25 CHAIR REISS: I see the first

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 person is Cristal Calderon. Cristal, now
3 you're unmuted if you want to turn your camera
4 on, you're welcome to.

5 MS. CALDERON: I'm just doing that
6 right now.

7 CHAIR REISS: We can hear and see
8 you.

9 MS. CALDERON: Okay, awesome. My
10 name is Cristal Calderon, I live in a railroad
11 apartment in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, currently
12 one of the most sought-out neighborhoods to
13 live in in New York City.

14 I moved into my current apartment
15 in 2009. My landlord hid the rent-stabilized
16 status of my apartment and overcharged me
17 \$1,200 to \$1,400 more than was legally
18 permitted per month for seven years.

19 In 2016, when I learned of the
20 rent fraud scheme the landlord was pulling in
21 four of their rent-stabilized buildings
22 throughout the neighborhood, I began a rent
23 overcharge claim through DHCR.

24 The landlord, her son and their
25 acting agents have begun -- began harassing me

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 on a daily and nightly basis since 2016, it
3 continues to this day. The harassment has
4 included having racial and homophobic slurs
5 hurled at my neighbor and I, threatening me
6 with rape on a number of occasions, warning my
7 neighbor and I that we are not safe walking
8 around the neighborhood, kicking and banging
9 on our doors, leaving feces on our doors,
10 stealing our mail and trash, and being
11 sexually assaulted in the hallway of the Kings
12 County Housing Court by my landlord's son,
13 who's the manager of her properties. The list
14 goes on and on.

15 The rent fraud scheme the landlord
16 has been running in four rent-stabilized
17 buildings in Greenpoint and Williamsburg
18 consists of fully renovating the buildings
19 without certificates of occupancy on file to
20 this day and renting an Air B&B in these
21 rent-stabilized units at over three times more
22 than what is legally permitted.

23 The ground floor units of these
24 buildings have businesses illegally operating
25 out of what are supposed to be rent-stabilized

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 apartments.

3 Other landlords have just been
4 recording vacant rent-regulated apartments in
5 an effort to wait out strong tenant
6 protections with the belief that lobbyists
7 will prevail in pushing new legislation that
8 will allow for easy deregulation in the near
9 future -- (timer).

10 I'm almost done.

11 My story and I are not an
12 exception, we're the rule. I just happen to
13 be one of the few tenants that have be able to
14 withstand and continue to fight such
15 unscrupulous and criminal behavior. Other
16 more vulnerable tenants are successfully
17 displaced through such crime and harassment;
18 an example, tenants with departments, senior
19 citizens, immigrants, tenants with
20 disabilities, et cetera. Landlords who have
21 been --

22 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 MS. CALDERON: Thank you.

25 CHAIR REISS: Our next speaker I

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 see E Margules but not sure the first name and
3 you are muted and your camera is not on if you
4 do want to turn it on.

5 MR. MARGULES: I'm Eric Margules.
6 I'm a landlord.

7 I just want to say inflation is
8 eight percent, I haven't gotten rent
9 collections from many tenants due to COVID and
10 I have very little hope that I'm going to be
11 able to get some of that money.

12 I can't make repairs without
13 money. The buildings are all very old, they
14 are deteriorating and if my other expenses I'm
15 going to have -- I have a host of expenses and
16 there's just no relief.

17 It used to be that if you were
18 renovating an apartment you could raise the
19 rent accordingly but you can't do that now.
20 So the only thing we can rely on is increases
21 in rent hoping that it will keep up with
22 inflation. And it's just not going to, four
23 or six percent does not keep up with
24 inflation, we all know.

25 So these buildings are -- I just

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 don't have the money to put in, they are
3 falling apart. They are not falling apart,
4 but I mean they are going to fall apart,
5 that's what the future is.

6 The buildings are suffering and
7 these increases are the only relief that we
8 have.

9 I'll just say that this whole
10 system is broken. This is crazy. I feel for
11 these tenants that don't -- that can't afford
12 a rent increase and they should not have --
13 they shouldn't have a small reasonable rent
14 increase but this whole thing where we're
15 keeping these tenants in perpetuity at these
16 way, way, way under-market rents and nothing
17 can be done about it, it just doesn't make any
18 sense.

19 This whole system doesn't make
20 sense. Right now we're working within the
21 system, we just need to keep up with
22 inflation, we need to be able to put money
23 back into the buildings so they don't fall
24 apart.

25 That's it. Thank you very much.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 Our next speaker -- the last
5 digits on their phone -- go ahead, the person
6 who ends 533 your phone number, please speak.

7 SANDRA: Good evening. My name is
8 Sandra (indecipherable). I just like to say a
9 few words about the (indecipherable) and also
10 of the people that are living across all the
11 boroughs of New York having difficult times,
12 even though we are going through a pandemic,
13 paying the rent due to lost income.

14 And also I think that the
15 landlords should be not getting the rent
16 increase from the tenants, I think people
17 should be able to stay in their homes without
18 worrying about are they going to be homeless.

19 So I'm asking for a rent rollback.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
22 testimony.

23 I see the next person on our list
24 I think it's S. Fulson, name I'm not sure. S.
25 Fulson, we haven't given you permission to

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 speak yet technologically, we're waiting to do
3 that and then you'll be the next person.

4 You're permitted to speak so the
5 floor is yours. S. Fulson, you're ready to
6 go.

7 MS. FULSON: Hello.

8 CHAIR REISS: We're ready to hear
9 your testimony.

10 MS. FULSON: Yes, I'm calling on
11 behalf of Tilly Towers. We get an eight
12 percent rent increase and I want to know how
13 did we get out of Mitchell-Lama and we still
14 in fault with Mitchell-Lama and they saying
15 that we all going to be for Mitchell-Lama and
16 we don't have no protection.

17 Also our building has been
18 stabilized and now we not going to be
19 stabilized in the rent from the rent increase
20 and a lot of people that's senior citizens and
21 people who is working, they can't afford the
22 rent of the rent increase.

23 So I'm asking for it to be freezed
24 or we don't get the rent increase this year.

25 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 testimony.

3 Our next speaker is Zenayda
4 Bonilla. Hi.

5 MS. BONILLA (through interpreter):
6 Hi. Good evening, my name is Zenayda Bonilla,
7 I'm a mother, student, college student. I'm
8 also a volunteer in the community and I've
9 established myself in Sunset Park now for
10 almost 20 years.

11 Today I'm here to raise my voice
12 and to talk about the economic impact that my
13 family and my neighbors have suffered as a
14 result of raised rent increases taking into
15 account that the pandemic has still not ended
16 and there aren't economic opportunities for
17 our communities that are both Latin, LatinX
18 and color.

19 Again, the basic needs are
20 increasing. Our family is composed of five
21 people and eight days ago, I underwent
22 surgery, my husband is unemployed and we have
23 very little in terms of savings.

24 By having a rent increase I would
25 have to leave school, again I will see my

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 future ruined. Again, I think it's unfair to
3 have a rent increase when all the poor
4 communities that have been the ones to raise
5 the city again and the state and the country
6 and the economy, that we again be thrown out
7 as if we were trash.

8 It would not be fair since this is
9 -- there's no balance since we don't have the
10 same opportunities that other people have.
11 It's not fair for us to add more stress and
12 more anxiety and more issues because by
13 removing us and displacing us from our homes,
14 that's not only impacting our lives, our
15 physical and emotional lives, but it also
16 impact very negatively our self-esteem, our
17 children's self-esteem and it will cause them
18 to have bad results in their grades because of
19 course it will be leaving their own spaces
20 where they were raised and where we actually
21 lay down roots.

22 So my ask is that rents be reduced
23 because we are going there a huge crisis and
24 we are the ones that are most affected.
25 Please, listen to the voice of the people,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 listen to us because it is not fair that this
3 be done to us. Thank you so very much.

4 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 Our next speaker is Teddy Thomas.
7 Teddy, you are muted and -- there you are, we
8 have you.

9 MR. THOMAS: Thank you, David, for
10 allowing me to speak. I'm a tenant in a
11 rent-stabilized building in Upper Manhattan in
12 West Harlem. I've lived here for five years,
13 and I want to address something that the
14 landlord Eric just said about buildings about
15 to be falling apart and then needing more
16 money to upkeep those buildings and prevent
17 them from falling apart.

18 My building is falling apart
19 already. We have already talked about the
20 fact that increases for landlords, for slum
21 lords, have been outpaced -- landlords profits
22 have outpaced inflation. They have continued
23 to reap the benefits of the good times of the
24 Guiliani era of the de Blasio era, taking in
25 more money than they need to upkeep these

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 buildings while not putting in basic
3 maintenance.

4 In my apartment building, I've had
5 water leaks from my bathroom ceiling, from my
6 living room ceiling, from my bedroom ceiling,
7 from the day that I moved in in December of
8 2017. I've had an active HP case where my
9 landlord refuses to do the necessary repairs
10 despite having a court order issued against
11 them.

12 Eric, we're not talking about
13 landlords tonight. The Rent Guidelines Board
14 is not here to give you more money, the gravy
15 train is ending. It's time for tenants to get
16 a rent rollback in New York City.

17 Until we get the maintenance that
18 we deserve, until we get habitable conditions,
19 until inflation is decreased and until tenants
20 recover from the pandemic and are able to pay
21 back the rent that you so vocally want to cry
22 not getting from them when they have been
23 unable to pay for food and medical care, until
24 all of that has been resolved, we cannot
25 increase rent. We need a rent rollback of at

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 least two to three percent.

3 Thank you for allowing me the
4 opportunity to speak.

5 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
6 testimony.

7 Our next speaker Yessenia
8 Carvajal. Welcome.

9 MS. CARVAJAL (through
10 interpreter): Thank you so very much. Good
11 evening to all of you. So I am speaking on
12 behalf of my parents because about a year and
13 a half, I left New York for the very same
14 reason -- my apologies, for the very reason
15 that because of the fact that things were very
16 expensive and things became extremely
17 expensive in New York.

18 At the moment I am speaking on
19 behalf of my parents because they needed to
20 stay in New York. I actually lived in Sunset
21 Park and I lived there for 25 years and they
22 needed to stay there.

23 But at the moment my parents and
24 my daughter are still there and they will
25 probably have to leave and go their separate

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 ways and rent out a room because from \$2,000
3 the rent was raised to 2400. They, of course,
4 cannot afford this rent and for this very
5 reason I'm here to speak on what's going on.

6 The fact that rents are going up
7 too much, I believe something needs to be done
8 so that this -- we can put an end to all of
9 this. Thank you so very much for your time.

10 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 I believe our next speaker is John
13 F. John, you're muted. There you go and your
14 camera -- there you go, welcome.

15 JOHN F.: Good evening. Thank
16 you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to speak
17 really quickly.

18 I've been listening for the last
19 couple of hours and I think where we are is
20 that this is extremely complex for both sides.
21 But I'm just going to give you my take of it.

22 I'm a career (indecipherable), I
23 work in community-based organization, we serve
24 senior citizens. And I think a rent increase
25 at this time will really be detrimental for

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 our senior population.

3 I've heard mentions of SCRIE
4 tonight, I want to put out there that for
5 seniors for a loan to go through the process
6 is extremely difficult. So that may be the
7 reason why folks don't have it.

8 But yeah, the other thing is those
9 of us who are in the social service industry,
10 I'm lucky, I'm involved -- I'm a member of
11 1199 so I'm a social service worker in a
12 union; however, there are social service
13 workers out there who have not received the
14 cost of the living increase under several
15 living evictions.

16 So I think keeping all of that in
17 mind, and again, understanding where the
18 landlords stand in this, the inflation and
19 things of that nature, I think the rent
20 increase at this time is going to be extremely
21 detrimental. I would hope that the city would
22 look to find other ways of making the
23 landlords whole, especially with the financial
24 -- with the prediction of a recession.

25 I just really feel at this time,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 again, I'm repeating myself, but I just want
3 to get it out there so you understand at this
4 moment in time, and I hope you guys take in to
5 consideration the seniors and the people that
6 provided the services to them.

7 So thank you for allowing me to
8 speak and everybody have a good and safe week.

9 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 Our next speaker is Gordon Lee, I
12 see you, you're muted if you want to turn off
13 the mute.

14 MR. LEE: Yeah. I think that --
15 good night, people, my name is Mr. Gordon Lee,
16 as you all know. I'm also here to tell you
17 don't increase rent 'cause if it's going to go
18 up and up and up, how are we going to afford
19 it? We have no way of affording it. I can't
20 do magic and pull a thousand dollars out of my
21 pocket to pay rent. If rents go up and up and
22 up and of course eventually we won't be able
23 to afford it ever again.

24 And you'll also have to roll the
25 rent back because it is too high. We have to

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 pay rent, we have to make sacrifices, we
3 couldn't really make -- I was always for a
4 long time took issue with the way things have
5 gone, including the runaway inflation. It's
6 got three things, one runaway inflation,
7 gentrification and neo-Colonialism.

8 The prices are going up and up and
9 up until we eventually cannot afford it ever
10 again for the rest of our lives and we're
11 priced out of our hometown.

12 I'm demanding you don't raise
13 rent, roll it back and I'm demanding that
14 gentrification be banned. Why? I just
15 explained why.

16 And again, what all of these
17 people said, they are right. I also maybe for
18 my own reasons, I'm unable to pay an
19 ever-rising rent increase. Thanks for your
20 time.

21 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
22 testimony.

23 I saw someone named on the screen
24 but I've lost her. All right so maybe should
25 we -- Andrew, should we move to the next

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 speaker until the Assemblymember gets back on.

3 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay.

4 CHAIR REISS: There's the
5 Assemblymember. Assemblymember, welcome.
6 You're muted and your camera is not on if you
7 want it to be on. Assemblymember, you're
8 still muted.

9 ASSEMBLYMEMBER MITAYNES: Can you
10 hear me?

11 CHAIR REISS: You're unmuted now.

12 ASSEMBLYMEMBER MITAYNES: Thank
13 you so much.

14 I am Assemblymember Marcela
15 Mitaynes, I represent the 51st Assembly
16 District, those are the neighborhoods of
17 Sunset Park, Bay Ridge and Park Slope.

18 I'm here because I'm tired of
19 hearing year after year landlords complain
20 about not being able to afford to maintain
21 their buildings. They have years of neglect
22 of basic repairs and maintenance and not
23 something over the last couple of years.

24 But the landlords have choices
25 while tenants don't. Landlords have the

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 opportunity to be made whole because of state
3 provided money for the rent that tenants owe
4 during the pandemic. There's programs
5 available, free or low cost for new boilers
6 and windows the landlords don't take advantage
7 of.

8 They can also file their taxes at
9 a loss or lastly, if they are really hurting
10 they can sell their property.

11 Year after year they complain
12 about their loss on their investment. But
13 they seem to forget an investment doesn't
14 guarantee a gain and sometimes there is a
15 loss.

16 The Rent Guidelines Board does
17 have a choice, the choice to be on the right
18 side of history. We cannot sacrifice one
19 class for another. The poor, working class
20 needs help and we must intervene. We cannot
21 feed into the greedy capitalists.

22 Right now a one-bedroom apartment
23 is going for \$2,500 a month and in order to
24 apply to rent it you have to prove that you
25 are making 40 times the salary, that's

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 \$150,000. Rent Guidelines Board, I am a state
3 assembly member and I don't even make that
4 much money.

5 This is not a political decision,
6 this is a decision that has to be made
7 morally. The right thing to do is to at least
8 pass a zero percent increase. Folks are still
9 struggling, they need assistance.

10 And shame on this Mayor who was
11 president of the Borough of Brooklyn to not
12 have a hearing in person in his borough.
13 Shame on him for being the senator who used to
14 represent Sunset Park and the tenants took the
15 time to put him in office. Remember, it was
16 the tenants that voted for you. You need to
17 do right by these tenants, they need a
18 zero percent increase. Thank you.

19 CHAIR REISS: Thank you,
20 Assemblymember.

21 Our next speaker it says Advocate
22 Mimi. If you could give us your full name,
23 I'd appreciate it and the floor is yours.

24 MS. MITCHELL: Hi, there. My name
25 is Mimi Mitchell, I'm a member of Crown

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Heights Credit Union and I'm also a volunteer
3 advocate at Legal Hand Crown Heights and a
4 bunch of other organizations that I'm an
5 advocate for.

6 I live in Brooklyn and I along
7 with the people that I assist, namely people
8 of color in underserved communities, we are
9 afraid of being forced out. We're already
10 under pressure from our landlords due to heavy
11 gentrification.

12 Please do not help them complete
13 this plan. A rent increase would do just
14 that. Most of us are already paying over
15 50 percent of our income in rent. We're not
16 millionaires, we don't have summer homes and
17 we're not millionaires who are living off of
18 the fat cow, we're working people who are
19 already rent and income burdened.

20 Most of us haven't even recovered
21 from COVID. I, myself, don't even have a job
22 -- don't have my full-time job back from
23 COVID, we're still in a pandemic. Not only
24 are we in a pandemic, but prices are inflating
25 as we all see and we're heading for a

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 recession.

3 I guess what I'm asking for is
4 consideration. I'm asking for you to consider
5 the fact that landlords are going to use this
6 increase as a way of getting rid of tenants.
7 Landlords are also going to -- are not going
8 to use this increase to make maintenance
9 repairs.

10 You've given them increases after
11 increases after increases, yet six years on I
12 still have over 50 violations in my apartment.
13 None of them have been fixed. I paid my rent,
14 you gave them the increases, what did they do
15 with it? They enriched themselves with it.

16 My landlord alone owns over 20
17 buildings, he just signed an \$18 million deal
18 that was written up. He don't need my rent
19 increase, what he really wants though is my
20 apartment so that someone else paying triple
21 what I pay can move in.

22 Thank you very much for your time.

23 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 Our next speaker is CL Management.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 You're muted and your camera is not on. And
3 I'm going ask that you also give us your full
4 name, I'd appreciate it.

5 MR. CHUN: Yeah, can you hear me?

6 CHAIR REISS: I can hear you. If
7 you want your camera on, it's not on.

8 MR. CHUN: No, I'm okay.

9 My name is Alan. So can I speak
10 now or...

11 CHAIR REISS: Alan, can you give
12 us your last name as well.

13 MR. CHUN: Chun, C-H-U-N.

14 CHAIR REISS: Thank you. Welcome.

15 MR. CHUN: So my name is Alan and,
16 you know, we open a couple buildings in Hell's
17 Kitchen, Manhattan and, you know, I'm a
18 landlord, you know, I was a renter, you know,
19 before in my day and I'm also a homeowner.

20 So I think like, you know, I hear
21 a lot of tenants complaining and, you know, I
22 understand that, you know, I know that there
23 are some bad landlords out there, I personally
24 know some, but there are some -- also we have
25 to also acknowledge that there are some bad

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 tenants too.

3 You know, and I think that during
4 COVID, neither the landlords nor the tenants
5 really gained, you know, much. I mean, like,
6 we all had financial hardships, we all had
7 stress. You look on a New York Post article,
8 you hear about this landlord making equities
9 who spent a lot of money on a boiler trying to
10 do well. There are some good tenants and
11 there are good landlords, too.

12 And if, you know, I feel for those
13 tenants that have those repair issues, you
14 know, we try to avoid them because we don't
15 want that stress and if you don't believe us
16 you can come to our building and take a visit
17 too.

18 I think that, you know, as a
19 landlord as much as I would like to freeze the
20 rent or rollback, I mean, honestly that's
21 really very, very difficult. I understand the
22 timing, we can get back to this next year or
23 whatever, but costs have gone up a lot, you
24 know; food, gas, those buildings that have oil
25 heating. Those are facts, you know.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 I think that, you know, if I
3 generate \$100 in rent and I take away \$5, I
4 think that might be fair but at this point
5 \$100 might equate to what? So where does it
6 become kind of that breaking point where, you
7 know, these building owners are going to lose
8 out.

9 So I'm just saying that, you know,
10 you have to, you know, really understand both
11 sides of the coin here and, you know, as a
12 landlord I just, you know, I hear you, but, I
13 mean, I just advocate for somewhat of a rent
14 increase on this guidelines this year.

15 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 The next person I think I see is
18 Zenayda Bonilla, I think we saw that person
19 but maybe it's another person testifying in
20 that Zoom, I'm not sure.

21 MS. GARCIA: Do you want to make
22 the repeat announce?

23 If folks want to testify and they
24 are using the same name with the same profile,
25 they have to give us a heads-up. People

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 cannot testify under the same name or the same
3 person multiple times.

4 CHAIR REISS: So maybe it makes
5 sense to go to -- until we determine the
6 situation with Zenayda Bonilla identity --

7 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I'm trying to
8 move some folks, hold on one second.

9 CHAIR REISS: So Sheila, they
10 should log out and relog in in another name;
11 si that what we're saying?

12 MS. GARCIA: If they are together,
13 they can just text us and I can -- they'll
14 just let me know that it's a different person.
15 I think they might have been a mistake 'cause
16 they lowered their hand.

17 And then Channa, your hand is not
18 raised so if you do not raise your hand they
19 will not call on you to testify.

20 CHAIR REISS: All right. Just so
21 everyone knows, we're just waiting to promote
22 somebody so they can speak next that's why
23 we're a little quiet.

24 I think we have Tim Paulson who's
25 been promoted. Tim, you're muted and your

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 camera is off if you want to turn that on.

3 MR. PAULSON: Okay.

4 CHAIR REISS: Welcome.

5 MR. PAULSON: Yes. Thank you.

6 I'm trying to turn my camera on.

7 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I accepted a
8 promotion but he's able to speak, the only way
9 can I bring him into the meeting is if the
10 camera -- if he accepts the promotion but we
11 can hear you, Tim, if you just want to go
12 ahead.

13 MR. PAULSON: I'm just going to go
14 ahead.

15 I'm Timothy Paulson, I'm in the
16 East Village. I am a long-term resident, I've
17 been here since 1988 and I am really here to
18 represent for GOLES, Good Old Lower East Side,
19 but also for my own interest and also for the
20 interest of New York residents and tenants as
21 a whole.

22 And what I am here to say is one
23 of the things that doesn't get said is the
24 larger picture. If we allow the whole
25 situation to be flipped and to say, well, now

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 it's okay for real estate for landlords to
3 clawback through higher or even any kind of
4 increase in rent, to clawback from the freeze
5 and, you know, then that completely eliminates
6 any benefit to anybody living as a tenant in
7 New York.

8 It's in an absolutely absurd
9 scenario. It makes no sense at all.

10 If you're going to give somebody
11 something and then take it back, they a
12 hundred percent don't have the thing that you
13 gave them; in other words, if I give you \$100
14 and then two months later -- because have you
15 no money, and two months later, and you still
16 have no money, I take the \$100 back which is
17 the scenario because COVID hasn't gone away.
18 And the effects of COVID are still trailing
19 us, of course; not even trailing us, we're
20 still in it. The idea that we need to
21 suddenly give back to landlords is insane.

22 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 Our next speaker is Maria Barbara
25 Lopez. You're muted and your camera is not on

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 if you want to turn on your camera.

3 Maria, you're still muted. We can
4 hear you now.

5 MS. LOPEZ (through interpreter):
6 I'm Maria Barbara Lopez and I've been living
7 in the city for 43 years, in particular Sunset
8 Park, I live in the same building since
9 43 years ago.

10 My apartment is old and it still
11 needs to be repaired the apartment, the
12 kitchen, this has been obsolete. The backup
13 is extremely old and they always increase my
14 rent.

15 Previously my family is here, now
16 I'm by myself and I haven't had a job since
17 before the pandemic because I'm taking care of
18 my father. And all this time I have not ever
19 stopped paying my rent and even though I don't
20 have a steady job, I live day to day and I
21 prefer -- I'd rather not eat or not buy me
22 something that I want and pay for my home.

23 This increase will affect my
24 emotional stability, I don't want to wind up
25 on the streets because it's been 43 years and

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 I've lived in the same place.

3 The subway is constantly reminds
4 me that I'm an immigrant but I love this
5 country and I have worked very hard to -- for
6 my children to progress. For me, it's very
7 important not to lose my home just like any
8 other New Yorker because everyone in my
9 neighborhood of Sunset Park, we are
10 hardworking people, honest people and
11 top-of-the-line people.

12 It's very important that the Mayor
13 remembers that Brooklyn is his home and we
14 supported him for him to be where he's at.
15 And above all, this country, without us, would
16 be nothing. Please keep in mind that this
17 country, immigrant workers formed this
18 country.

19 Please understand we're not asking
20 for anything except what is fair; a home and
21 the right to live well and work which
22 currently there is none. Increasing rent will
23 affect all working-class people. Thank you.

24 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
25 testimony.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 MS. GARCIA: Can I take a second
3 to remind folks that if they don't raise their
4 hand and keep their hands raised, they will
5 not get called on to testify.

6 I've gotten a few names of folks
7 who say they want to testify but have not
8 raised their hands. Please raise your hand if
9 you would like to testify.

10 CHAIR REISS: Khadija Haynes,
11 welcome.

12 MS. HAYNES: Hi. Hello, my name
13 is Khadija Haynes and I'm here today because I
14 passed out in my basement apartment from the
15 former place I was renting from carbon
16 monoxide poisoning because of terrible, awful
17 landlord neglect.

18 And I'm here today to say that
19 please stop aligning with the landlord class
20 who are on here complaining -- landlords are
21 on here complaining about they don't have any
22 money and blaming tenants and, you know, about
23 good landlords and all of this nonsense.

24 And this is not true. People are
25 being forced to take these deplorable living

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 conditions and to live in illegally converted
3 basement apartments because of the exorbitant
4 rents in this country.

5 And just like they -- maybe if
6 they would stop trying to live off of their
7 tenants, maybe they can pay for things and
8 they wouldn't have to rely on their tenants to
9 pay for their life. And as a result of that,
10 people are dieing people -- apartments are
11 being flooded like what happened to the
12 Guyanese family in Queens. I was a victim of
13 landlord abuse to the point where I almost
14 died and this city is punishing people. This
15 is genocide what is happening to people.
16 There are tons of homeless people on the
17 street.

18 Eric Adams, what he's doing to
19 people is hyper-exploitive and he needs to go.
20 And the landlord class, they need to go too
21 and this is why I'm here. I'm here to say
22 this and all of this nonsense about you can't
23 afford this, well just like you tell your
24 tenants to get a second job, you need to get a
25 second or third job maybe so you can afford

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 your expenses and stop treating tenants like
3 your cash pool because we have families and we
4 have lives and we need to eat too and we need
5 to have a quality of life.

6 There's no quality of life in this
7 capitalist system and we need to move away
8 from this and we need to hold the landlord
9 class accountable.

10 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 I have Camille Sosa next.
13 Camille, you're muted.

14 MS. SOSA: Hello. My name is
15 Camille Sosa, I'm a daughter and a member in
16 the organization Neighbors Helping Neighbors,
17 an organization that is focused on the
18 problems that is faced with landlords and
19 informing tenants of their forgotten rights.

20 I'm here to talk to you about the
21 consequences and the effects of putting the
22 rent increases in these times we're currently
23 living in. The reason why this is important,
24 because the times we are living in are not the
25 same times we are living in five years ago

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 where I could go outside with no mask not
3 having to worry that today was the day I get
4 infected with COVID. Where with \$2.50 I could
5 go buy a carton of eggs whereas in now, I need
6 like six.

7 These days it's more difficult to
8 find well-paying jobs, food prices and prices
9 of the basic needs are at their highest and
10 are not going down any time soon. An example
11 of this is the realization that day by day
12 it's getting harder and harder living in a
13 society that rarely gives out any help or
14 support that even includes the immigrant or
15 colored people community or even the low-class
16 community in general.

17 The stress people are living in
18 right now is only going to affect them even
19 more with rent increases. There are people
20 who don't even have the luxury to have a high
21 paying job. They don't deserve a rent
22 increase, they don't deserve stress when all
23 they want is to have basic needs.

24 Is the stress of knowing you
25 barely have enough money to provide for your

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 family not enough?

3 For me, looking at my parents not
4 being able to spend time with me due to work
5 hurts and it's either paying rent and food or
6 being evicted with hunger. Even though I'm
7 15, it hurts me seeing my parents suffer to
8 provide for me. Now imagine how younger
9 children would feel seeing their parents
10 struggle and spend less of their childhood
11 time with them due to the rent increase.

12 Thank you for listening, I hope
13 you take in consideration my words when you're
14 voting.

15 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 Our next speaker is Joyce Webster.
18 Joyce, you are muted and you're not on camera
19 if you want to be on camera. Joyce, I can see
20 you but you're still muted. I think you're
21 good now.

22 MS. WEBSTER: Thank you. Hi,
23 everybody. I've been a long-term tenant for
24 many years that had provided for where I'm
25 living at at 1237 Dean Street. I had to take

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 over and I was a sick person with asthma, the
3 landlord abandoned the building and it cost me
4 so much money to care for the building. We
5 need stuff away from the building. And not
6 only that, he put me in harm's way, I got
7 bitten by rats and up to today we didn't have
8 no heat ever since February.

9 But he came back, he didn't come
10 back and thank me, he harassed me out of my
11 place for years. And I got bitten by rats and
12 we didn't have no heat. Ever since it got
13 warm outside I figure that it's more warmer
14 out there and there was no heat ever since
15 February.

16 And another thing, we didn't have
17 no hot water for ten days now and almost like
18 burnt my feet by boiling for it. And I've
19 been maintaining this building for 14 years
20 out of my pocket. I had to end up paying for
21 all of services that he took out of my name
22 and up to today I don't have a meter because
23 of this man.

24 But he stepped away from this
25 building, not only harassing me for years over

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 13 years that he tried to force me out of my
3 place and I think I did a hell of a good job.
4 And for them to increase to put a raise on
5 rent, I think this is ridiculous, especially
6 when they know that it's a pandemic going on.

7 And for these landlords, I don't
8 know about them all, but my landlord
9 Mr. Ericson Pierre, he been like abusing me
10 over 13 years and I don't think it's fair that
11 people should have a raise increase on they
12 rent.

13 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
14 testimony.

15 MS. WEBSTER: Thank you so much.

16 CHAIR REISS: Our next speaker is
17 Maricela Sosa. Welcome.

18 MS. SOSA (through interpreter):
19 Hello. Good evening, my name is Maricela
20 Sosa, I'm a resident of Sunset Park I've lived
21 for over 35 years in this neighborhood and I'm
22 very sad to know -- to listen that they want
23 to increase our rent.

24 I'm here to talk to you about the
25 impact that this has had in our neighborhood,

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 increasing rents, and the reason why this is
3 important is because many families that live
4 conglomerated together and that's the way to
5 help each other out because the rents are
6 super high and the people in the community
7 makes very little money.

8 For instance, in 2020 a lot of
9 people with the pandemic -- they have people
10 living in apartment and every time that
11 there's a fire or an accident happens, many
12 fires and many people die because of the
13 reason many people live together. They live
14 in these apartments and the most important
15 thing of this is to let the community know and
16 to make them aware that as tenants we have
17 rights and to remember that we are in the
18 pandemic.

19 So please stop the rent. Do not
20 increase the rent, it's very important that
21 our people are the way that we are now,
22 comfortable, because to raise the rent means
23 stress for our community.

24 Thank you for listening to our
25 community.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 Our next speaker is Jinghai Feng,
5 who I believe had sound issues the last time
6 they spoke so to make sure that we're able to
7 hear the testimony.

8 MS. GARCIA: Can I confirm that
9 they don't need to promote both the names.
10 Are you using two devices or will you be
11 testifying from the phone that you're using
12 video on?

13 I can't hear anything, you're on
14 mute.

15 CHAIR REISS: They are on mute.

16 THE INTERPRETER: We're going to
17 be using the phone if that works.

18 MS. GARCIA: We hear you
19 perfectly. Hopefully the sound will stay the
20 same.

21 MR. FENG (through interpreter):
22 My name is Jinghai Feng, I've lived in this --
23 in my current apartment for 28 years. There's
24 been two different landlords in my time in
25 this apartment and my rent has doubled since I

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 moved in. I live with my wife and we are a
3 retired couple.

4 If the rent continues to increase,
5 we cannot bear this pressure. We want to use
6 the power we have to limit the rent increases
7 to less than two percent within the next two
8 years. We cannot bear an increase more than
9 this.

10 I really hope that the government
11 will use its power to help us maintain our way
12 of life. Thank you, everybody.

13 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
14 testimony.

15 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So David, I have
16 two folks who raised their hands. They keep
17 declining to be promoted as a panelist.

18 CHAIR REISS: Okay. Channa just
19 came on. If you could unmute and if you can
20 put on your camera, that's fine.

21 Andrew, I notice that the other
22 speaker doesn't have a name at all.

23 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I know, it just
24 says Guest.

25 CHAIR REISS: Okay. Channa, we're

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 ready, if you could unmute.

3 We can hear you now.

4 MS. CAMINS: That's fine. Hi, my
5 name is Channa Camins, I'm a rent-stabilized
6 tenant and a City employee. I cannot afford a
7 four-and-a-half percent increase and if I lost
8 my apartment, I absolutely would not be able
9 to afford a new apartment in New York City let
10 alone my neighborhood for the last 16 years.

11 The myth of a small, struggling
12 landlord betrays the reality that 91 percent
13 of small landlords do not own rent-regulated
14 apartments. And the maintenance of landlord
15 income should not be prioritized over the
16 needs of over two million working people who
17 are struggling and most of whom have not
18 received the cost of living increase to keep
19 pace with increased cost of living in this
20 city in the last decade let alone the last
21 couple of years. And many of whom bore the
22 brunt of the economic distress brought on by
23 the pandemic.

24 Landlords have had access to
25 emergency rental assistance money paid

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 directly to them and can still apply for
3 hardship assistance from the city. There are
4 also many incentives to lower the cost of
5 major capital improvements, particularly as
6 landlords go to comply with Local Law 97 which
7 will increase requirements for energy
8 efficiency.

9 The Rent Guidelines Board must
10 pass zero percent increase, it is the only
11 moral choice, anything else will exacerbate
12 the eviction crisis we're facing and push
13 people out of their homes. You don't want to
14 be responsible for this and we don't want to
15 see that happen in our city.

16 And I ask you to take into
17 consideration all of the testimony you're
18 hearing today and think carefully about this
19 as representatives who are meant to balance
20 the needs of tenants and landlords and not
21 just prioritize the investment income of
22 landlords. Thank you.

23 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 There's one more person with their

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 hand raised but they are declining to be
3 promoted so that they can speak. I think they
4 are ready to speak.

5 So we don't have your name, if you
6 could give us your first and last name that
7 would be great.

8 MALE SPEAKER: I'm not comfortable
9 giving my name and I hope that doesn't
10 preclude my comments.

11 CHAIR REISS: Go ahead.

12 MALE SPEAKER: Great. Thank you.

13 Pursuing any rent increase at all
14 right now is delusional and it misunderstands
15 the weight of this moment. It woefully
16 mischaracterizes what's happened to all of us,
17 including the landlords and including the
18 members of Rent Guidelines Board. You have
19 lost people too and the people you love have
20 lost people they love.

21 And it is disrespectful to the
22 dead to act as though the pandemic has somehow
23 been insufficiently catastrophic and doesn't
24 warrant a rent freeze to keep the people who
25 are lucky enough to survive safe in their

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 homes, keep them from becoming homeless, to
3 give them a place to socially distance to
4 safely isolate if they catch the disease, and
5 to learn to cope with the devastating
6 long-term effects.

7 If people cannot stay safe, this
8 will continue and they will infect you and the
9 people you care about.

10 I recognize the tensions here but
11 this in 2022 is not worth it, we'll talk again
12 next year. But this vote is not like the 2019
13 vote and it's not like the 2025 vote will be.

14 Landlords who do not have the
15 moral constitution to consider the moral
16 dimensions of housing during a crisis cannot
17 be good landlords; we don't want them and
18 neither do the policymakers who want to keep
19 New Yorkers alive.

20 If an investment is not working
21 out, you get out and find another investment
22 that you like more. Sell your building to the
23 tenants and go buy crypto currency or
24 something.

25 When the eviction moratorium was

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 lifted in January, almost instantly there were
3 so many eviction cases filed simultaneously
4 that the housing court couldn't find enough
5 lawyers and handled that scenario by
6 universally violating tenants legal rights to
7 have representation as required by law.

8 By any reasonable measure, this
9 was an incomprehensible miscarriage of justice
10 and anybody who disagrees with that statement
11 didn't really want to live in the society we
12 had before the pandemic and doesn't want to
13 get back there.

14 So to the people on the Board,
15 this vote is the single most consequential
16 thing that you can do to help. And I hope you
17 will.

18 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
19 testimony.

20 I have Veronica Mirafuente,
21 welcome.

22 MS. MIRAFUENTE (through
23 interpreter): Good evening. My name is
24 Veronica Mirafuente, and I am members of
25 Neighbors Helping Neighbors, I live in Sunset

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 Park.

3 I'm here today to talk to you
4 because I'm worried about the rent increase
5 because at this time the economic situation is
6 very difficult, especially in families that
7 live day to day to continue to move forward.

8 And right now it's very difficult
9 with all the things -- all the expensive
10 things that went up in price like the basic
11 needs of family, food. And it's two years
12 that we've gotten sick twice and we've had to
13 quarantine, locked up with having no income.

14 During this time, it's very
15 difficult to put together the rent every
16 month, it's going to be even harder for us to
17 pay the rent if it goes up. And we have
18 30 years living in this neighborhood, we live
19 here and our children were born here and our
20 grandchildren. We were struggling for five
21 years to end the landlord court so they would
22 go up like other people that would buy the
23 buildings and they wanted to sell it and
24 increase the rent without caring about the
25 circumstances that the economy is at this

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing
2 time.

3 We've been harassed for the owners
4 that wanted to evict us and because they
5 wanted the empty building in order for them to
6 bring the rent up. And it's not fair that we
7 can't testify in person here in Brooklyn.

8 Thank you very much and I
9 appreciate your attention.

10 CHAIR REISS: Thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 It seems that we've reached the
13 end of our speakers so I'm glad that we are
14 able to both hear all of registered speakers
15 who showed up as well as all of those who had
16 not registered.

17 I would just like to thank our
18 interpreters Caesar, Olvin and Liz, it's a
19 tough job and we are grateful and we know
20 we'll be doing more next week at our live
21 hearings.

22 I'd like to thank Andrew and
23 Charmaine and Danielle and Brian for running
24 the virtual hearings which have their own sets
25 of difficulties as well.

1 06-08-22 Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

2 I want to thank the Board members
3 for listening with me and taking into account
4 the comments that we've received from those
5 who have testified.

6 At this point, unless I hear of
7 any further business from the Board members, I
8 will ask if there's a motion to adjourn.

9 MR. EHRLICH: Motion to adjourn.

10 CHAIR REISS: Do I have a second?

11 MR. SCHWARTZ: Second.

12 CHAIR REISS: Good night, all.

13 Our meeting is adjourned. And we as the Board
14 and the staff and the interpreters will be
15 back next week for our live hearings. Have a
16 good night, all.

17 (Whereupon, the meeting concluded
18 at 9:10 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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2

3 STATE OF NEW YORK)
 : S S . :
4 COUNTY OF QUEENS)

5

6 I, NICOLE MANN, a Notary Public for and
7 within the State of New York, do hereby certify:

8 I reported the proceedings in the
9 within-entitled matter, and that the within
10 transcript is a true record of such proceedings.

11 I further certify that I am not related to
12 any of the parties to this action by blood or by
13 marriage and that I am in no way interested in the
14 outcome of this matter.

15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
16 hand this 13th day of September 2022.

17

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NICOLE MANN

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