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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
RENT GUIDELINES BOARD

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PUBLIC MEETING
OF THE
DIRECTORS

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Main Theatre of
Hostos Community College/CUNY
450 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10451

June 3, 2024
5:00 P.M.

B E F O R E :

NESTOR DAVIDSON,
THE CHAIR

1

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

3 Board of Directors:

4 Nestor Davidson, Chair

5 Arpit Gupta

6 Alex Schwartz

7 Doug Apple

8 Christina DeRose

9 Robert Ehrlich

10 Genesis Aquino

11 Adan Soltren

12

13 S T A F F:

14 Andrew McLaughlin - Executive Director

15 Brian Hoberman - Co-Research Director

16 Danielle Burger - Co-Research Director

17 Charmaine Superville - Office Manager

18

19

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P R O C E E D I N G S

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I'd like

4

to welcome you to this public hearing of the New

5

York City Rent Guidelines Board and thank you, all

6

for attending.

7

This is the second of four

8

public hearings to consider comments concerning

9

proposed rent adjustments for leases, for

10

apartments, lofts, hotels, and other housing units

11

subject to the Rent Stabilization Law of 1969 and

12

the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974. These

13

adjustments will affect leases commencing between

14

October 1, 2024 and September 30, 2025.

15

I will now take roll call.

16

Please respond if present.

17

Doug Apple?

18

MR. APPLE: Present.

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Genesis

20

Aquino?

21

MS. AQUINO: Present.

22

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Christina

23

DeRose?

24

MS. DEROSE: Present.

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Robert

1

2 Ehrlich?

3

MR. EHRLICH: Present.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Arpit

5 Gupta?

6

MR. GUPTA: Present.

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Alex

8 Schwartz?

9

MR. SCHWARTZ: Present.

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Christina

11 Smith?

12

MS. SMITH: Present.

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Adan

14 Soltren?

15

MR. SOLTREN: Present.

16

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Nestor

17 Davidson, I'm present. Let the record show that we
18 have a quorum.

19

The next two meetings of this

20 Board will be public hearings to comment on the
21 proposed guidelines on the following dates and
22 times:

23

June 5th at Founder's

24

Auditorium at Medgar Evers College, 1650 Bedford

25

Avenue, in Brooklyn, and;

1

2

3

4

5

June 11th at Adler Hall at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 West 64th Street in Manhattan. Both of these meetings will be from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

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13

Anyone who wants to comment on the proposed guidelines at a public hearing must sign up to speak. People wishing to speak at the public hearings can preregister in advance either through our website nyc.gov/rgb or by calling (212) 669-7480 from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Pre-Registration ends at noon on the business day prior to each hearing.

14

15

16

17

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19

For those who do not pre-register for the hearings, registration is also available at the public hearings from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. All of our public hearings will be live streamed and Spanish interpretation will be provided at each hearing.

20

21

22

23

24

25

We also accept comments on the proposed guidelines outside of our public hearings. You can submit written audio and video comments for the Board to review through June 11th. Instructions on how to submit these comments will be available on the Board's website at nyc.gov/rgb,

1

2 by email@askatrgb.nyc.gov, or by calling the RGB at
3 (212) 669-7480.

4

Our final vote on the
5 guidelines will take place on Monday, June 17th
6 starting at 7:00 p.m. at Assembly Hall at Hunter
7 College East 69th Street between Park and Lexington
8 Avenues. The public may attend in person or may
9 watch the vote live by streaming it on the RGBs
10 YouTube channel. To find out how, visit the RGB
11 website again nyc.gov/rgb, or call the RGB at (212)
12 669-7480 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

13

Before we proceed, I would
14 like to go over the rules and procedures for those
15 who are testifying before the Board. If you wish
16 to speak, you must confirm with RGB staff at the
17 registration table located near the entrance of
18 this hall. Speakers will not be called if you have
19 not checked in at the registration table.

20

There are Spanish interpreters
21 here today. When registering to speak, please
22 notify the staff if you would like an interpreter.
23 I will try to call several names in advance to let
24 you know that you will be soon called to speak.

25

If you have materials to

1

2 distribute to the Board, please give them to the
3 RGB staff sitting at the sign-in table near the
4 entrance.

5

I will attempt to alternate
6 speakers between tenants and owners, but this may
7 not always be possible.

8

In order to accommodate as
9 many speakers as possible, each speaker will have
10 two minutes to give their testimony. An additional
11 two minutes of speaking time will be given to those
12 speakers utilizing interpretation services.

13

To help speakers keep track of
14 their time, we have a clock. We will start the
15 clock when you begin speaking. The clock will beep
16 once the speaker has 30 seconds left, and will
17 continue beeping when the allotted two minutes are
18 up. If you are still speaking at the end of two
19 minutes, I will ask you to quickly wrap up your
20 testimony.

21

We expect many speakers and
22 the Board wants to hear from as many of you as
23 possible in the time we have for this hearing. We
24 understand that it may be difficult to say
25 everything you want us to hear in just two minutes,

1

2 but please understand that this -- that it is our
3 responsibility to try to make sure that everyone
4 who has taken the time to come here and testify
5 will have a fair opportunity to be heard.

6

Thank you for your cooperation
7 and the Board is looking forward to hearing your
8 comments regarding proposed rent adjustment
9 guidelines.

10

Owen, thank you.

11

I'm sorry your microphone is
12 not on. Great, thank you.

13

SPANISH INTERPRETER:

14

(Translating from English to Spanish.)

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

16

Our first three speakers will be Vajra Kilgore,

17

Nelson Donnes (phonetic), and Thiago Bronco.

18

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Sorry, we

19

have a microphone right there.

20

MALE VOICE 1: Mic is over

21

there.

22

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

23

so much. All right.

24

MS. KILGORE: The vast

25

majority of rent-stabilized tenants cannot absorb

1

2 any rent increase as you well know and clearly do
3 not care anymore than you pay any attention to your
4 own reports showing that landlords do not need a
5 rent increase. I might be one of the very few who
6 can maybe swing it, but you know what I hate? I
7 hate getting ripped off.

8 New York City landlords have
9 so much excess wealth from our rents that they can
10 easily play the schemer scam of legalized bribery
11 known as campaign contributions. And now you are
12 tasked with making sure they get the pro quo for
13 the quid by ripping all of us off. The last public
14 member brave enough to make a common sense
15 recommendation to freeze regulated rents and
16 buildings with more than a certain percentage of
17 deregulated apartments got bounced right quick. So
18 we know what you're tasked with.

19 So, "oh, the other boroughs
20 are not making enough too much so we have to rip
21 off everyone. Oh, repairs," (Unintelligible) was
22 sent to jail because he can't afford to make
23 repairs. He chose not to make them like landlords
24 all over the city, which is why repairs are an
25 enforcement issue, not an excuse to reward

1

2 negligence with more money.

3

4 Oh, inflation; rents drive
5 inflation freeze them. This Board stealing from
6 the poor to give to the rich year on year has
7 created a homeless population the size of a city in
8 itself.

8

9 WNYC recently reported that
10 the number of available apartments keep shrinking
11 and prices keep rising seven times faster than
12 wages. That is insane. You are shredding the
13 social fabric of this city.

13

14 This Board's legal task is to
15 prevent rent gouging. It long ago earned the title
16 Rent Gouging Board and as well on the way to
17 another R for "Rent gouging rip-off board."

17

18 The only difference between
19 you and the guy who calls me to say, yes, ma'am,
20 it's about your computer, is that I can hang up on
21 him. And if I've said anything to hurt your
22 feelings, please don't try to assuage them by
23 punishing the people of New York with higher rents.
24 Just do the right thing. You'll feel better if you
25 just do the right thing and at the very least,
freeze rent.

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

Mr. Donnes?

4

MR. DONNES: Good evening,

5

ladies and gentlemen. This is my first time

6

speaking in one of these venues, so I want to thank

7

everybody; the Board and of course everyone in

8

attendance who made it today.

9

My parents came to this

10

country in the 1940s from the Caribbean island of

11

Puerto Rico. They taught themselves how to speak

12

English and read English and put us through

13

Catholic school.

14

Within my life, I decided to

15

buy small properties and invest. So I'm a small

16

building owner. I don't have thousands of units.

17

I treat my tenants well. But I do know that when

18

you hear landlords or if you own, whether it's a

19

single home or multiple home, a two-family,

20

three-family, you're a business owner whether you

21

believe it or not, and you have to run it like a

22

business. Otherwise, if it'll fail, you're going

23

foreclosure and then you go back to living an

24

apartment.

25

We lived in the Lower East

1

2 Side in a railroad apartment. The bathroom was
3 shared with everybody else in a hallway by the way.
4 Anyone does that. Oh, okay.

5

6 So coming from nothing and
7 just try to make -- make ends meet and building my
8 life with my family, I still work. I want to give
9 everybody a true example of math. Something basic.

9

10 In 1975 when I got married and
11 I worked in a jewelry company in Manhattan called
12 Yellow Hamed Corp., I lived in the Bronx at 2057
13 Ryer Avenue, right off the Grand Concourse, one
14 bedroom, four story walkup. My rent was 125 a
15 month. My salary in a factory, 135 a week; one
16 week covered my rent.

16

17 So you have to also look and
18 say, are we not paying our labor enough in America
19 to justify them having existence? That should be
20 looked at. As a small building owner and very
21 proud American Puerto Rican, I don't feel like I
22 own something anymore. I feel that I have a
23 restaurant, and everyone here can get a restaurant,
24 and now the city is going to tell you what the
25 price of the food is going to be for your customers
coming in.

1

2

MR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

MR. DONNES: Thank you.

4

(Applause.)

5

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6

Tiago Bronco? And our next

7

three speakers after that will be Joyce Holland,

8

Ruben Hernandez, Ramirez, and Beam Sanchez. Thank

9

you.

10

MR. BRONCO: Good afternoon.

11

My building at 1314 Grand Conco has 39 units, 21 of

12

which are rent-stabilized. The landlord for whom

13

the division of housing and community renewal, as

14

well as his Board are nothing but money making

15

tools habitually dances around rent stabilization

16

laws.

17

Her favorite tactics are, one,

18

filing fraudulent apartment registrations to

19

increase their unit's market value and thus both

20

raise the legal and preferential rents.

21

My three room apartment, for

22

example, has been listed as five rooms for 10

23

years, but the landlord hasn't dared to raise the

24

legal rent because I'm onto her scam.

25

Her second tactic denying

1
2 lease renewals and written breakdowns of rent
3 arrears to the elderly and the disabled so they can
4 re-certify for Scr Andria (phonetic) as well as
5 agencies providing rental assistance that can
6 actually help them stay in their homes. The vacant
7 units will then be listed as emergency housing
8 because there's more money in it.

9 Low on fixed income citizens
10 are having to rents raised once again, yet the
11 millions being brought here, not for humanitarian
12 reasons, but for the sole purpose of voting,
13 democrat, get free housing, medical care, three
14 squares plus snacks, cash, cell phones, internet
15 and unfair access to social services that I pay
16 for.

17 They get to live in Hotels
18 where I contemplate the possibility of sleeping on
19 a park bench on Park Avenue every time this Board
20 approves an increase.

21 In case the audience doesn't
22 know, this Board is divided into three groups: The
23 owner camp representing my unscrupulous landlord;
24 the tenant camp supposed to be fighting for me,
25 and; the ostensibly impartial public camp playing

1

2 all four sides of the fence in the name of the
3 common good. Right. There's no question where the
4 owner's camps loyalties lie, but I wonder who's
5 really buttering the other two camps' bread.
6 Whatever happened to their ethics, to the integrity
7 ones at the core of their moral compass?

8 I beseech you to stop helping
9 landlords profit from our constant fear of
10 homelessness. Do the right thing for a change and
11 vote "No" on the proposed increase or at least
12 table them until our economy has improved and the
13 country has been reclaimed. Acts this increase.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.
16 Joyce Holland?

17 MS. HOLLAND: Good evening.
18 I'm here to speak on the own on owner's behalf. I
19 can't say any more eloquently than the previous
20 owner who spoke; Ms. Alejandro. I don't -- I'm not
21 certain about the name. Basically there are three
22 things I want to mention.

23 There needs to be means
24 testing. That is there are a number of legislators
25 as well as celebrities living in a rent-stabilized

1

2 apartments on everyone's dime. Okay?

3

4 So small owners in particular
5 are feeling it more. 40% insurance costs, 8% --
6 8.5% increase on the water, taxes as you well know
7 are going up. It's insurmountable.

8

9 The other thing that needs to
10 be mentioned is contrary to what everyone believes,
11 no one is making money. No one that is on the
12 owner's side. Small owners are hurting badly. As
13 the previous owner mentioned, he works. Some of us
14 take on a second job just to keep up with the
15 bills. And I think I'll end there. Thank you.

16

17 MR. DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18

19 Ruben Hernandez Ramirez?

20

21 And we'll need an interpreter
22 thing. Thank you, Owen.

23

24 MR. RAMIREZ: Hello. Good
25 afternoon. My name is Ruben and I am part of
26 (unintelligible), an organization that fights for
27 just and worthy living spaces. We are here today
28 to demand of you that we do not want a rent
29 increase. That is our demand. The access to just
30 and worthy living spaces in this city becomes more
31 and more expensive every single year.

1

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25

Myself, along with millions of other migrants and immigrants in this city, do not want a rent increase. On the contrary, we want accessible living spaces for everyone. I, myself, suffer a greatly every single month to make my rent payments. The pandemic affected us in terms of our job, our economic power.

We reiterate this once again, "Please, no rent increase." The people who stand together shall never be vanquished. People who stand together -- people who stand united will never be defeated. Please put an end to rent increase! Please put an end to rent increases! Thank you. Thank you.

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

Hellen Sanchez?

MS. HELLEN SANCHEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Hellen Sanchez, and I'm again (unintelligible). I am here to -- again, to demand that we not have a rent increase. We have to consider that someone who has a job where they earn \$12 an hour, works eight hours a day, five days a week, earns \$1,920. If you look at the monthly expenses, \$900 worth of rent, \$800 in food,

1

2 and \$130 in utilities, only \$90 are left. And
3 that's only for a single person. You have to look
4 at additional expenses if they have children. It
5 would be school supplies, internet, clothing, and
6 this rent increase would directly impact people's
7 pockets. That's all.

8 People who stand united will
9 never be defeated. Please put an end. Please put
10 an end to rent increases. Please put an end to
11 rent increases. That is all. Thank you.

12 (Audience participation.)

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
14 Thank you. Our next three speakers will be Brenda
15 Yorizari (phonetic), Crystal Parrish, and Alan
16 Fletcher (phonetic.)

17 MS. YORIZARI: Good evening.
18 My name is Brenda Yorizari, and I am a member of
19 Tenants and Neighbors, Met Council, and Northwest
20 Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. I have lived
21 at 3215 Bainbridge Avenue in the Bronx for 42
22 years. My landlord is Brandon Yazer.

23 I am asking for a rent freeze
24 because over 50% of New Yorkers are paying more
25 than 30% of their income towards rent. Currently,

1

2 my rent is affordable due to tenant longevity and
3 reasonable rent increases. For example, from 2022
4 to 2024, my rent increased by \$34 a month.

5 However, my lease renewal for 2024/2026 will
6 increase my rent by \$38 the first year, and \$45 the
7 second year. The two increases total to \$83.

8 If the RGB continues to
9 approve rent increases of this nature, I worry that
10 I won't be able to afford my apartment on a fixed
11 income.

12 In addition to paying a rent
13 -- in addition to paying a higher rent every two
14 years, there's a reduction with service. My
15 landlord is saving money on heat while I pay more
16 and get less?

17 In closing, tenants need
18 relief. Many families and individuals are
19 rent-burdened. Essential services are and repairs
20 lag behind. The RGB's proposed lease renewal
21 increases will further housing insecurity and
22 displacement. Therefore, I am urging the Board to
23 vote for a rent freeze. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25 Crystal Parrish?

1

2

MS. PARRISH: Good afternoon.

3

My name is Crystal Parrish and

4

I live at 225 West 123rd Street in New York City.

5

The name of the management is Kraus Management that

6

has many buildings here in Manhattan, in the Bronx

7

and Brooklyn, Queens. But I'm not just standing

8

here just for myself. I'm standing here for all my

9

neighbors. Every last one of them in this room

10

right here is my neighbor. The word of God said to

11

love thy neighbor as thyself.

12

We are here today because we

13

need a freeze on our rent. We can't afford this

14

higher rent from last year, they wanted 3.5 to

15

where I was living, and now they want more money

16

for just one year. Now it's a higher increase of

17

rent. We have people here just disabled. We have

18

people here that has large families. We have

19

people here that also that has disability.

20

You know, we cannot afford any

21

of these high increases and more high increases

22

again, because soon we will be homeless. We need

23

our apartments. We need a roof over our heads to

24

continue to have the livelihood that we have.

25

Now, my management again is

1
2 Ashlin Management. Also the owner there is Joseph
3 Mayoff. From August up until December, the lobby
4 door in my building was broken. The intercom was
5 broken. I talked to the management more than one
6 time, nothing was not done until this year when I
7 got HPD involved and had the city inspectors to
8 give them eight different violations because we
9 didn't have no safety and security there. The
10 laundromat was broken. All the machines.

11 We are asking for help today.
12 We need them to come in and fix our apartments.
13 Some of them have mold inside of their apartments.
14 Please help us today and please hear our hearts as
15 we speak to you today. God cares about all
16 humanity. Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
19 Thank you.

20 Alan Fletcher? And our next
21 three speakers after Mr. Fletcher will be Santos
22 Heda, Redis Galves, and George Soderoff.

23 MR. FLETCHER: Good afternoon.
24 I'm currently at 276 118th Street -- 119th Street.
25 The main portion or question I have is, how can

1
2 there necessarily be an increase especially with
3 mine to spend \$50 just for this lease when there
4 currently since January, HPD has found 12
5 violations, the landlord has been found with four
6 false certifications, there's been a sewage
7 complaint going on, there's been a vermin complaint
8 in my apartment, there's been a vermin complaint
9 found by HPD in the basement and in the first
10 floor? And then also the rubbish. HPD is also
11 violated. In total it's over 15 violations found
12 by HPD since January, but yet they are still able
13 to increase the rent.

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

15 MS. GALVES: Good afternoon to
16 all of you who are here, and those of you that are
17 seated in the audience as well. My Name is Redis
18 Galves and I come here to speak to you regarding
19 the situation that we're living in right now in
20 this country. In a situation where we are being
21 abused by landlords. And the rent I've been paying
22 since 1937 with 57 cents a year. And I have
23 received a new lease for \$2,070 and 38 cents. 3%
24 increase with \$62 and 11 cents. And the amount
25 that should be paid is 2,132 and 49. Which is not

1

2 worth paying for such an apartment in such bad
3 condition.

4

5 There's mold, there's Lots of
6 vermin in the apartment, and that's because the
7 basement is filled with rats, and there's lots of
8 pollution inside of the apartments.

8

9 Aside from that, my husband
10 has to use oxygen. And again, that's for a
11 building located at 2420 Davidson. Please find it
12 in your hearts to look at the situation of everyone
13 in that building and everyone seated in this space
14 today, aside from all of the other immigrants in
15 the city. Please don't allow us to be
16 psychologically abused the way that we have. Thank
17 you so very much.

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18

Is Santo Sebera here?

19

Santos? George Sederoff?

20

MR. SEDEROFF: Yes.

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

22

George.

23

MR. SEDEROFF: Thank you.

24

Ladies and gentlemen, it is logical to be cynical
25 when it comes to economists. I am not an

1

2 economist, but I have audited the economics course
3 at Father Guido Sarducci's Five Minute University
4 where I did learn that all important economic
5 axiom; supply and demand.

6 Pork bellies and boxcar of
7 wheat are commodities. People are not. People are
8 human capital cities are for people, not just for
9 wealthy landlords. People are the foundation of
10 everything else in an economy.

11 We have moral, ethical, and
12 practical reasons to provide our people with safe,
13 affordable housing. Children are little people who
14 need a cohesive family structure stability to
15 maximize their potential. Without regulation, we'd
16 have the Wild West. Evictions are not progressive.

17 Faced with these realities, do
18 we really want to watch rent stabilization devolve
19 into the slums of the 1920s, especially now that
20 Amazon has just accepted a \$138 million welfare
21 check from the state of New York.

22 Right now in New York City
23 there are held-off the market or there is held-off
24 the market a greater supply of vacant dwelling
25 units than there are homeless people.

1

2

Why is this? It's simply

3

because dwelling units like people are not

4

commodities. If dwelling units were commodities,

5

then landlords would be in serious competition for

6

tenants by offering more and better services at

7

reduced rents.

8

One doesn't have to be a Rhode

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scholar to see that whether the rent is raised,

10

frozen, or rolled back. Landlords, because they're

11

currently enjoying a 38 percent return on their

12

investment, will experience no change whatsoever in

13

their lifestyles. On the other hand, tenants who

14

are already burdened -- rent-burdened could well

15

experience the violence of eviction.

16

What is it to be done is

17

obvious at a time when inequitable tax laws

18

exacerbate and already huge wealth gap. Real

19

public service demands putting people ahead of

20

profits, therefore vote for a rent rollback.

21

(Applause.)

22

MR. DAVIDSON: Thank you. Our

23

next three speakers will be Ramon Katala, Precious

24

Dupree, and Safe Gazi.

25

MR. KATALA: Good afternoon to

1

2 all. I'm here to support so many of the tenants
3 that are here today that have been living in
4 rent-stabilized apartments for such a long time.
5 And of course, landlords have made lots of money in
6 previous years, and they've made that money off of
7 us. All of the tenants that are located here that
8 have been living in these buildings for so long.

9 And now of course things have
10 changed and everyone is aware of that. And of
11 course they don't want to admit that something that
12 costs \$50 now costs 20, and something that's now 20
13 costs \$60. How is it that people now can afford
14 groceries for a family of four?

15 I've tried to move to these
16 new buildings in the Bronx, and of course, every
17 time I go, the rent is either too high or I don't
18 qualify. Those rents -- and those apartments are
19 actually for people that work on Fifth Avenue, that
20 work in Wall Street and can afford that rent.

21 And of course the increase
22 that now these landlords seek they don't remember
23 back when they made a lot of money off of us; out
24 of all of these tenants that are here now
25 requesting help.

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I'm here today to ask you and everyone else here for all of us to please unite to help the Bronx because we have to do what's possible to help and unite people. Thank you. Until later.

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

Precious Dupree?

Safe Gazi?

MR. GAZI: All right. Hello, everyone. My name is Safe. I am a 21 year college student, and this is actually my first public hearing.

So I wanted to preface by starting off with a few points. I think it's kind of, or it's -- I should say it's largely absurd for us to be having this hearing today, given the -- what we all know to be the current economic and political state of this nation. Since 2021, which it's been three years, there has been the third -- this nation has seen the third largest wealth transfer in my 21-year-old lifetime which is unlike in -- from an economic perspective that's unforeseen.

Three large wealth transfers

1

2 in my lifetime alone means that the middle and
3 working class have basically ceased to exist. And
4 to be clear, these are wealth transfers in which
5 wealth is moving to the top, i.e. the small
6 landlords and the large landlords that were all
7 here trying to somehow support today.

8 So I find it honestly
9 abhorrent that this council would consider even in
10 increasing the rent, knowing that the large
11 majority of this city in the current economic state
12 can barely afford necessities. And I obviously, I
13 do not have a list of sources to name off the top
14 of my head, but we are all aware that the cost of
15 living has increased almost, I believe it was 200
16 percent cost of groceries. That's increased 200
17 percent in the past two years. I believe it was
18 according to the New York Times.

19 And so in that context, I want
20 to urge you to think about what the city will look
21 like in 10 years or 20 years, when the working
22 class has, by all means, cease to exist. Where
23 will the social -- what will happen to the cohesion
24 of the city; the social fabric? The social
25 contract that keeps this nation alive will cease to

1

2 exist.

3

4 We're at a wealth disparity
5 that is greater than revolutionary France currently
6 in the United States. And we are still considering
7 squeezing more money out of the people who have
8 none left. Thank you.

8

(Applause.)

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
10 We're just going to take one moment. We're having
11 a little technical difficulty.

12

Our next three speakers, while
13 we're working this address, to announce them,
14 Patricia Juit, Gordon Lee, and Elizabeth Thompson.
15 Give us a moment. Thank you.

16

(A recess taken to address a
17 technical issue.)

18

MS. JUIT: Good evening. Are
19 you guys ready?

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: One
21 second. Andrew, Ready? Okay. Please go ahead.
22 Thank you.

23

MS. JUIT: Good evening. My
24 name is Patricia Juit and I have been living in the
25 Bronx for the better part of my life. I actually

1

2 moved into the Bronx in 1977 and I thought that I
3 really did the right thing because I wound up in a
4 building with a tenant organization and it was
5 rent-stabilized. And I really thought that after
6 working 30 plus years for transit and living in
7 rent-stabilized, I would not have too many worries.
8 Boy, was I wrong?

9 Every time a landlord gets any
10 kind of renovation, any kind of improvement, it is
11 off of the backs of the tenants. They get
12 multimillionaire dollar loans, we have no input.
13 But boy do we pay? We pay through the nose.

14 The last rent increase, major
15 rent increase in the last few years before -- right
16 before the pandemic was \$300 a month, \$300 a month,
17 and then you want to add your 2 percent or your 1
18 percent without realizing the domino effect that it
19 has on a pensioner, on a senior citizen, who has
20 paid their 33 percent in taxes for the longest.

21 And now that landlord got a
22 okay from HPD to a do a \$300 jump. And then I have
23 to face your jumps. But you know what? I'm not
24 getting a \$300 increase in my pension. Not for the
25 year, damn sure, not for the month.

1
2 So when you think about what
3 you're doing, please try and remember the little
4 guys that this city is built on. It's built off of
5 our backs. Why do I have to decide if I'm going to
6 pay the rent or eat? It's disgusting because \$300
7 a month can do a lot. But instead, I have to make
8 sure that extra \$300 a month is going to the
9 landlord, and trust and believe he's making his
10 profit. He's making his profit off of me and mine.
11 And everyone in this room is in the same boat. And
12 you know what? It's a leaky boat. So we're asking
13 you to think about a rent rollback. Rent rollback!
14 Rent rollback!

15 (Audience participation.)

16 MS. JUIT: Because --

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18 MS. JUIT: Because we need it.

19 We need it. We need to be able to eat. We need to
20 be able to put on a shirt.

21 When I was coming up, all I
22 had to do was worry about my mom only had to worry
23 about rent, ConEd, and maybe the landline. Today,
24 everyone in this room in order for their kids to
25 succeed, It's not just rent, it's not just ConEd,

1

2 it's also the internet. And Lord, you cannot send
3 your child outside without a cell phone because the
4 streets are not safe.

5

6 So when you think about the
7 burdens that we are carrying, rent should not be
8 breaking our back. Rent should not be breaking our
9 backs. Please think about that. Thank you. And
10 God bless.

11

(Applause.)

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank You.

13

Gordon Lee? Is Gordon Lee here?

14

MS. THOMPSON: I am Thompson.

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Elizabeth

16

Thompson. Thank you.

17

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you.

18

19 Good evening. My name is Elizabeth Thompson. I've
20 been living at 20 --

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Can you

22

23 speak into the mic please? Thank you.

24

MS. THOMPSON: Okay.

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

26

MS. THOMPSON: My name is

27

28 Elizabeth Thompson. I've been living at 2757

29

30 Claflin Avenue since my son was six years old. My

1

2 son is deaf because of the -- have changed.

3

4 The thing is, my landlord,
5 when I moved in, everything is supposed to be up to
6 date. I find out that I had lead in my apartment
7 in 2011. So from 2019 -- 1983 up until 2011, my
8 kids and my grandkids living in that apartment were
9 leads. So who's responsible? My landlord.

9

10 When they -- when I came in
11 the apartment, they had a rent scrap (sic). DHC
12 all told me follow their advice. I didn't. And I
13 did not save the money. So I had to go out and
14 find \$10,000. If I didn't find \$10,000, I would've
15 been homeless.

15

16 Thank God for the system. I
17 found that money and me and my grandkids. He has
18 seizures right now, so he's still in the
19 predicament but my daughter went to college. She
20 still have to pay that college money. All our
21 children are paying and paying and not getting any
22 satisfaction. What are we doing to them?

22

23 I work for health and
24 hospital. I'm still being attacked by people who
25 says, "Oh, you are entitled to this, entitled to
that." I'm 76 years old and everybody is wanting

1

2 -- wanting to get a piece of the action. It's no
3 action to get peace of right now. I need support.
4 I need support from you all to make sure that I
5 don't get evicted.

6

And it's the same landlord.
7 They just change hand. And that's the thing right
8 there. Please help us. Please give us a red
9 rollback and for a senior citizen to have somewhere
10 to live.

11

(Applause.)

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

Our next speaker is Adepatro Atreshe?

14

Mr. Atreshe?

15

MALE VOICE: He's coming.

16

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Okay. Thank
17 you. And I'll just remind everyone that we can
18 still hear from Gordon Lee, Precious Dupree if
19 she's here, and Santos Sepera. Thank you.

20

MR. ATRESHE: My name is
21 Adepatro. So we're fighting for -- because of the
22 renting increase. The rents go up, groceries go
23 up, ConEd goes up, medical bills go up, jobs are
24 not paying enough, you have to work three or four
25 jobs, and the elderly, of course, we are getting

1

2 older, we are not getting any younger, and
3 everything that we get on a monthly basis stays the
4 same. The bills go up, but we don't have enough to
5 pay for everything.

6 We cannot work any more than
7 we've already worked in our lifetime. What you're
8 doing is setting the elderly up to wind up on the
9 streets as if we didn't have enough people on the
10 street already. We don't have any other
11 alternative. That's all. Thank you so much.

12 (Applause.)

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
14 Just a quick announcement and reminder, if you want
15 to speak, please make sure to sign up at the desk
16 outside the hall. Thank you.

17 Our next three speakers will
18 be Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Sandra
19 Mitchell, and Valentine Lopez.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. GIBSON: Good evening.
22 Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the Bronx.
23 Thank you to the Rent Guidelines Board, to our
24 chair, Nestor Davidson and all the members of RGB.
25 I officially welcome you to the Bronx, and I thank

1

2 you for convening tonight's meeting. Truly
3 appreciate the opportunity to testify right here in
4 our borough of the Bronx regarding the proposed
5 rent hikes that the RGB is considering.

6 Access to safe, quality and
7 affordable housing is a fundamental right. The
8 rent stabilization system is one of the
9 cornerstones in our city of affordable housing, and
10 we must continue to protect it. It is proven to be
11 a lifeline to help so many working in middle class
12 families remain in their homes and in their
13 neighborhoods.

14 Over the past several years,
15 our city has faced numerous challenges related to
16 housing and helping residents stay in their homes.
17 Since the end of COVID, we've seen about 7,000
18 residential evictions in the Bronx alone. And the
19 rate of evictions is rising; that ain't right.

20 As one of the prime sponsors
21 of our city's historic right to counsel
22 legislation, thank you to Casa Bronx, and everyone
23 that fought for right to council. I know the
24 impact that families experience when they're facing
25 eviction.

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I'm concerned about the recent decline in the percentage of tenants in housing court that are receiving right to counsel. Only 40 percent of Bronxers in housing court had access to legal representation in the final quarter of 2023. I will continue to be a loud voice to ensure that it is strengthened at the New York City Council and the Adams administration fully fund right to counsel.

As the inflation continues to address so many of the concerns that we are facing in this borough, let me just wrap up and say that these proposed hikes will be devastating for hardworking middle class families during an unprecedented housing crisis.

I urge the RGB to protect New Yorkers and Bronxers by rejecting these proposed rent increases and saving the housing stability and the housing infrastructure in this city. At this critical time, we cannot, and we should not support any rent increases that will further punish and penalize our tenants and have lasting consequences on the Bronx and the city of New York.

The full testimony will be

1

2 submitted officially to the members of the RGB, but
3 as a collective, this Bronx is united, this borough
4 is united, and we ask for your full consideration
5 to reject the proposed rent hike increases for New
6 Yorkers, and stand with tenants because tenants
7 have endured far too much. And we need your
8 support. Thank you so much and good evening,
9 everyone.

10

(Audience participation.)

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12

Sandra Mitchell?

13

MS. MITCHELL: I'm here.

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay. No

15

rush. Oh, Can we get a microphone? Okay. One

16

moment please, ma'am.

17

MALE VOICE 1: The mic is on

18

the other side. One second.

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: One

20

second. We're going to get it over to you. Okay.

21

One second. Thank you. The mic has to go up

22

there. Thank you for your patience. One moment.

23

Thank you.

24

MS. MITCHELL: Good afternoon,

25

everyone. My name is Chaplain Sandra Mitchell, and

1

2 the chaplain are first responders when there are
3 crises. Food, clothing, fire, we are first
4 responders.

5

Even though I'm a conqueror of
6 six strokes, I'm still a first responder. And I'm
7 a first responder with CASA in Northwest Bronx in
8 reference to this housing crisis.

9

As we heard our Bronx Borough
10 president so eloquently tell about what would be
11 the consequences of any rent increase. I want to
12 talk about my building where we had no water, where
13 we had sludge coming up from the basement into the
14 lobby, where we have rats as big as cats, and they
15 don't move when you -- when you try to challenge
16 them, where we have mice running around in the
17 walls where we had no elevator; and I live on the
18 fifth floor and I had my sixth stroke in that
19 building, fighting as a tenant organizer for proper
20 services. We had no heat, we had no hot water. We
21 had no water. We have sludge coming up in the
22 toilet and in the sink. We had to go out and buy
23 water to make formula and for -- to wash ourselves.
24 No one should be living under these conditions.

25

I am a Bronx resident for 55

1

2 years and for 55 consecutive years we had to keep
3 moving and moving and moving because of no heat
4 --no hot water, rodents, unsafe living conditions.
5 We have one death in my building and the stress of
6 it all is inhumane.

7 It's a fundamental right to
8 have housing. As a mental health counselor -- as a
9 certified mental health counselor and behavioral
10 health specialist, I look at the behavior and the
11 decisions of those who are put into office to help
12 us -- supposedly to help us -- but I want to know,
13 where is your moral conscious? I'm praying. I am
14 praying because today it's me having that stroke
15 and getting my temperature so low, 90.0 hypothermia
16 sitting in my apartment. Yesterday was me, today
17 could be you. If that doesn't -- if that doesn't
18 do anything for you.

19 (Applause.)

20 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21 Thank you, ma'am.

22 Our next speaker will be
23 Valentin Lopez. Oh and we need interpretation.

24 Valentin Lopez?

25 MR. LOPEZ: Good evening to

1
2 everybody. I'm here to tell you, I'm Valentin
3 Lopez, I'm disabled. I can no longer work because
4 I was operated on a knee. The little that I'm
5 given is not enough for me to pay rent. What I
6 earn from social security is 1,022 and they're
7 reducing it by a hundred dollars for Medicaid. My
8 current rent is 1,435 and I receive something
9 stating that it's now going to be 1,478. And I
10 cannot do that, it's impossible. I don't think
11 that's fair what they're doing.

12 I have three kids, the
13 youngest is seven years old. Sometimes, I feel
14 really bad when we're outside in the street and
15 he's asking me to get him something and I'm not
16 able to. Sometimes I walk him around where the
17 vendors are not outside selling because I'm too
18 embarrassed, because he doesn't understand when you
19 tell him you don't have money, he thinks you're
20 lying to him. That's impossible that something
21 like that continues occurring especially in a place
22 like this; like New York.

23 I would also like to tell you,
24 it's not fair. It's not fair what
25 (unintelligible). The landlord does not fix

1

2 anything. So in February there was a fire in some
3 building on 173rd Street. There were about eight
4 people displaced and the judge gave them until May
5 31st to make some repairs and do some stuff and
6 they didn't do anything. I have a neighbor that's
7 on the like sixth floor that she is not able to
8 come here, because she's -- she's disabled as well.

9 That can't happen in -- that
10 can't happen in a nation like this that's so
11 powerful. That's basically a crime. You're
12 sitting there all reunited (unintelligible). I
13 would like for you all to have a little bit of
14 consciousness and you know, maybe take a trip to
15 housing court where I go every Monday to help out
16 and provide a little bit of support there.

17 I've seen how people have
18 actually fainted in court because they just don't
19 know what to do. Many times they displace families
20 with little children and they don't care and they
21 just throw them out onto the street. The landlords
22 have their own lawyers there and then they get all,
23 you know, hard and in the tenant's faces and then,
24 you know, make a tenant sign and, you know, it's
25 not fair, aAnd that can't keep continuing to

1

2 happen. I myself don't even know what to do
3 because currently, I'm behind on my rent because
4 what I earn is not enough to pay it. I think
5 what's going on with the lenders right now is
6 (unintelligible).

7

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

MR. LOPEZ: It's just unfair
9 what's happening. Don't increase the rent.

10

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11

MR. LOPEZ: You have to be
12 aware.

13

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

14

MR. LOPEZ: They don't
15 increase our -- our income. Food is in the -- is
16 so high.

17

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18

Thank you.

19

MR. LOPEZ: It's too much. I
20 think all of you there should have a little bit of
21 (unintelligible). And thankfully --

22

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

23

MR. LOPEZ: -- what you're
24 doing and the crime you're committing against us is
25 inhumanity. It's an injustice.

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

Our next speaker will be New York City Council

5

member Pierina Sanchez. Council member, thank you.

6

MS. PIERINA SANCHEZ: Good

7

evening. I'm council member Pierina Sanchez, chair

8

of the Committee on Housing and Buildings in the

9

New York City Council and representative of

10

District 14, which is the Northwest Bronx Community

11

Clergy Coalition CASA, and so many New Yorkers who

12

are struggling. I'm going to try to keep it within

13

the time limit today. I respect your time and I

14

just joined to urge the members of the Rent

15

Guidelines Board to reject proposed increases for

16

New York rent-stabilized tenants.

17

According to the Board's own

18

2024 income and affordability study, non-payment

19

filings are up 23.5 percent. There's been an

20

increase of 34.5 percent in nonpayment cases heard

21

and 195.4 percent increase in evictions in this

22

last year. The proposed rent increases would

23

render even more New Yorkers susceptible to the

24

destabilizing threat of eviction. And the stories

25

that you're hearing today, thank you for listening,

1

2 are the stories behind these numbers.

3

4 Furthermore, with a vacancy
5 rate of rent-stabilized units at 0.98 percent, a
6 functional zero, if you don't live in one, you
7 can't find one and a 1.4 percent vacancy rate
8 citywide, those evicted will have little recourse
9 other than to go to shelter or to join the 200,000
10 black New Yorkers who have left the city in the
11 last two decades. And the low income and working
12 class New Yorkers leaving in record numbers due to
13 the cost of living.

13

14 As the demand for housing
15 continues to surge and supply remains severely
16 constrained, we know what we have to do. We have
17 to increase housing supply, increase New Yorkers
18 ability to afford their homes. That's why I have
19 led on expanding voucher access. We have to invest
20 in building upgrades and help owners to be able to
21 afford maintenance. All of these things we are
22 doing. Protecting rent-stabilized tenants, your
23 job in the face of insurmountable evidence of
24 hardship, is critical.

24

25 This is not all to say that
landlords have passed unscathed, but that is why

1
2 thousands of constituents who have entered my
3 office personally, crying to me for help with
4 affordable housing; Ms. Maria Claudio, Mr. Johnson,
5 Mr. Jackson, I implore you all to keep true to that
6 original intent of the Rent Guidelines Board and
7 the rent stabilization law. To not partake in the
8 furthering of unjust, unreasonable and oppressive
9 rents that your body was created to disrupt. Thank
10 you.

11 (Applause.)

12 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.
13 Thank you. Our next three speakers will be
14 Eneroliza Ventura, Stephanie Caban, and Kendall
15 Jackman.

16 Eneroliza Ventura? We'll need
17 a translator. Thank you.

18 MS. VENTURA: Good evening.
19 My name is Eneroliza Ventura. It seems like the
20 landlords here don't have any control, but they do
21 have control to raise the rent, but they don't fix
22 anything. They don't have supers. They don't
23 really care except that they want to be paid before
24 the fifth, and if you don't pay them before the
25 fifth, they'll charge you \$25 for paying late. But

1

2 they don't care that there's a bunch of rats, they
3 don't care that water is falling on top of you,
4 that the windows are broken. They don't care about
5 anything. But what they do care about is money.
6 That's it.

7

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you
8 very much. Thank you. Stephanie Caban. Thank
9 you.

10

MS. CABAN: Hello. I didn't
11 know I was speaking today, but thank you so much.
12 I'm here as a representative from the Dias pa'lante
13 Collective. We are fighting for a free Puerto
14 Rico. Let's go.

15

(Applause.)

16

MS. CABAN: I'm also here as a
17 representative and a member of the Northwest Bronx
18 Community Clergy Coalition. Let's go yellow
19 shirts.

20

(Applause.)

21

MS. CABAN: One of our chants
22 that we did today was, "Show us what community
23 looks like. Show us what democracy looks like.
24 Show us what justice looks like." And this does
25 not look like that. Us right here right now, this

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

Kendall Jackman? Thank you. While, Mr. Jackman is

5

getting in place, our next three speakers will be

6

Marsha Alcanon (phonetic), Danielle Guggenheim, and

7

Carine Ombongo Golden (phonetic).

8

MS. JACKMAN: Good evening.

9

My name is Kendall Jackman. Currently I'm not

10

living in the house. In 2008 my uncle had a heart

11

attack and being the only living relative next in

12

line, I had to take care of him. That caused me

13

losing my job at the postal office. In 2009 I

14

found myself in the shelter system. 2013 they put

15

me in supportive housing, which I can't get out of.

16

You want to talk about homeless? I'm a member

17

picture of homeless. I'm on the Board of Bronx COT

18

for Northwest Bronx.

19

I've gone to a few other

20

organizations like New York City Community Land

21

Initiative, where we're looking to make community

22

land trusts. So we have some affordable housing in

23

the city. But I'm stuck. I come from a family who

24

survived -- my grandparents survived the

25

depression, raising my father and my uncle. I was

1

2 raised by that group of middle class people who own
3 homes, who bought cars, who went on vacation, who
4 sent their children to college.

5 Now the grandchildren are
6 having a problem staying where we were raised in
7 Brooklyn, in Bronx, Manhattan, in New York City. I
8 was here in high school when the city went bankrupt
9 and the federal government gave us the finger. All
10 the elders who have homes now stayed in 1970; they
11 didn't go anywhere, but now you want to take their
12 houses from them so you can build some business
13 centers in East New York and around the city.

14 We don't want any of that.
15 All that sky high stuff you're building, we don't
16 want it. We want regular homes. All the houses
17 you heard about, they used to be something you want
18 to live in. Now, there's nothing you want to be
19 anywhere near, but we have no choice.

20 So you need to do as Stephanie
21 asked you to do, and as council member Sanchez did;
22 don't raise the rent. It's bad enough now. We can
23 barely afford it and we don't get services for it.
24 So if you want to do something for the people of
25 the city, don't raise the rent.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

Marsha Alcanon? Marsha is not here. Okay, thank

5

you. Danielle Guggenheim. Thank you, Danielle.

6

MS. GUGGENHEIM: Good evening.

7

What I ask of you all is not to see us as the

8

other, but to see your story or your parents' story

9

and ours. Many of us are immigrants like many of

10

you or not you, but perhaps your grandparents or

11

parents here fighting for the American dream. The

12

rents are too high. COVID has happened, wages have

13

not gone up. I really just want you to understand

14

that it would be detrimental to families.

15

You're making \$15 an hour,

16

maybe 18, the average rent in the Bronx, and I'm

17

being conservative, is \$2,000. What that gentleman

18

said about his children, that's real. My

19

intersectionality of being a Bronx born resident

20

and a teacher, I see that. I go shopping for my

21

house, I also go shopping for my students for snack

22

because they're hungry. Please see yourself in us

23

and do what is fair and let us remember that one of

24

the things that makes America great is the ethos of

25

"We leave no one behind."

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

Carine? Thank you.

5

MS. GOLDEN: Good evening.

6

Good evening, Board. I have a story, but before I

7

start, I want you to understand two definition.

8

One definition is Dracul Lord. Dracul Lord is a

9

landlord that harass and strategically evict his

10

tenant for no good reason. Then you have the

11

Vampire network. The vampire network definition is

12

the elected official; RSA, VETNI, the bank, the

13

promoter, everybody that work against the tenant.

14

I live in a building of one of

15

the best rich Dracul Lords of New York City. One

16

of his well-kept building collapsed leaving 47

17

family without a roof over the head during the

18

holiday day in winter December, 2023. I have a

19

story to tell you today. Once upon a time, a

20

thriving city allowed a tenant to leave and built a

21

strong environment for their family. But few years

22

later, the first mega poll of the world, New York

23

City, associate herself with the vampire network

24

against the tenant with high rent, no effective

25

logistic to help them.

1

2

Linda Peterson? Thank you.

3

MS. PETERSON: Okay. I just

4

want to say thank you. Good evening and thank you

5

for listening to us because we need your help.

6

I've been living -- my name is Linda Peterson and

7

I'm with the Northwest Bronx and I'm so happy to be

8

with Northwest Bronx. I've been living in my

9

building 2170 University Avenue for 40 years.

10

When I first moved there, it

11

was nice, but then things got worse. They -- the

12

repairs wasn't getting done and a lot of people in

13

the building didn't know what to do. They didn't

14

know their rights. They didn't know how to speak

15

up. So then one day I ended up joining Northwest

16

Bronx and because I joined Northwest Bronx, things

17

started getting done. Repairs are getting done,

18

but it still needs a lot. My super, he has more

19

paint on his clothes than he puts on the walls. He

20

walks around with his phone in his hand more than

21

he does with the tools. And we have to tell -- and

22

I let the people in my building know, since

23

Northwest Bronx has taught me a lot, that we have

24

rights.

25

And I tell them, if things are

1
2 not done, you have to call 311. You have to speak
3 up, because if we pay our rent, then come on,
4 seriously. And then sometimes when the elevators
5 are broken or something has to be repaired, then
6 they'll say, "Oh, you get a rent increase because
7 they fixed the elevator." Why are you getting our
8 rent gun up to fix the elevator or to do the paint
9 -- because we supposed to have elevators. There's
10 two elevators in our building. You have seniors in
11 there with wheelchairs, walkers. I mean, you have
12 people with babies and there's seven floors in my
13 building. Seven floors. And that is the -- that
14 -- I mean, building is big. And that's why I have
15 to stay on it. And I let my neighbors know that
16 when I come to our meetings and for you all to hear
17 us, that I'm not coming just for me. I'm coming
18 for the whole building. There's 110 apartments in
19 that building and our landlord is Chestnut Holdings
20 and we got a big D on the front of our building.

21 Now what does that tell you?
22 I mean, so that's why I'm saying thank you and I
23 pray that you all will help them to not to raise
24 the rent. Right now, I'm retired, but not because
25 I reached the retirement age. A lot of people

1

2 don't know they moved retirement age up to 67.

3 Right now I'm getting survivor Social Security
4 because my husband passed away and we would've been
5 married on May 25th 40 years. You see that? So
6 that's how long we've been living there together.

7 So I thank you and I pray that
8 you can help us, because when I see all the
9 homeless people on the streets, I say a prayer and
10 I just say, "I pray that one day I won't be out
11 there or that my children won't be out there or my
12 grandchildren." So I please ask you to please help
13 us and hold these landlords accountable. If we
14 paying our rent --

15 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

16 MS. PETERSON: -- and we are
17 working with our building, then why should we have
18 to be put out or why can't we get the things that
19 we need? And I said, thank you so much, please.

20 (Applause.)

21 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

22 Mr. Agramante? We need a translator.

23 MR. AGRAMANTE: Good evening
24 to everyone. My name is Liborio Agramante. Where
25 I live there are very -- there are a lot of

1
2 disabled people. Where I live in the building,
3 there are a lot of disabled people, people that
4 cannot walk, there's a few blind people, and the
5 rent just keeps going up. And actually, very
6 recently, there's a female neighbor that lives
7 there and she's blind. And she received a letter
8 telling her that they were going to increase the
9 rent and she was crying. And you know, she's like,
10 how can this happen?

11 So those people that are
12 disabled, like they can't walk, they're blind,
13 things like that, how are they able to defend
14 themselves when they get a letter increasing their
15 rent because their income isn't increasing. So I
16 can't work either. I was operated on and I cannot
17 be -- I cannot stand for a long amount of time. So
18 I have my rent paid, but I also receive food
19 stamps. But the thing is, you go to the
20 supermarket and the prices just keep going up. You
21 go today it's one price, you go tomorrow it's a
22 higher price. That can't continue.

23 So any person that receives a
24 check, it doesn't matter who the person is, it
25 could be any person that receives a check and then

1

2 they have to pay increase in rent and food that
3 keeps going up and prices that keep going up,
4 that's going to affect you. Like, is there in
5 income going up? No.

6 So even like a police officer
7 has a certain income, but his income isn't going up
8 like all the time, but the -- you go to the
9 supermarket and the merchandise every day is going
10 up. It's a different price every day, but the
11 income isn't a different amount of money every day.
12 Have a good evening, everybody.

13 (Applause.)

14 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

15 MS. RUIZ: I am here
16 representing all the tenants in my community that
17 are really struggling every day because they are
18 not able to meet their rent. What they're thinking
19 during these times is, "Am I going to pay rent or
20 am I going to buy the things that I need for basic
21 necessities." So many tenants in the community
22 that I know, they kind of balance out their
23 payments. So one month they'll pay the rent, and
24 the next month they'll buy enough to sustain
25 themselves for the following month.

1

2 come right back. Thank you.

3

MS. HILL: Good evening, Rent
4 Guideline Boards, and fellow residents. My name is
5 Joanne Hill. I've resided in the West Bronx
6 Highbridge area since 1984. My landlord is Diamond
7 Management. I feel that a rent increase would
8 seriously affect many low and fixed income tenants.
9 A rent increase would displace so many of us Bronx
10 residents and cause the loss of our affordable
11 rent-stabilized apartments. This loss would just
12 add to the already large population of homeless
13 unhoused individuals in our Bronx communities.

14

Furthermore, a rent increase
15 would force tenants to make the difficult choice
16 whether to pay rent, utilities, buy food, or
17 medicine as many are forced to do each month. I
18 hardly ever get repairs without calling 311 or
19 going to housing court. Many landlords own
20 numerous properties throughout the city of New
21 York. I imagine they are collecting millions of
22 dollars in rent money, but do not invest money in
23 the building's upkeep. Tenants do not get timely
24 repairs when violations exempt are issued.

25

Our ZIP code 10452 and many

1
2 others have been identified as a gentrification zip
3 code. There are new residents moving in our
4 communities with significantly higher income than
5 our average income -- medium income and high bridge
6 of 36,536. A rent freeze is greatly needed by all
7 residents just to maintain a roof of our head and
8 food on our tables. Tonight, I speak not only for
9 myself, but many rent-stabilized tenants who fear
10 retaliation and harassment from their landlords for
11 voicing their rights.

12 Thank you for your time and
13 consideration. Respectfully submitted. Joan Hill,
14 Tenants Association leader, Casa involvement.

15 (Applause.)

16 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.
17 Thank you.

18 Rosa Alberto?

19 MS. ALBERTO: Good evening. I
20 live at 308 Willis Avenue and it's not fair that
21 for the last 10 years, the main door, the entrance
22 door, is broken and it still has not been repaired.
23 Another thing is you call the office. And they --
24 so you're saying that they can't speak Spanish.
25 Like what's up with that? I feel that they should

1

2 have someone there that speaks Spanish because they
3 rent to pretty much all Spanish speakers. The
4 garbage is just there in the hallway and it's just
5 like smelly and it's just like pestilence, and
6 then, you know, what are we supposed to do? Like
7 who are we supposed to call?

8 They're increasing the rent
9 and then they don't go to check things out. So I
10 was having basically the roof fall on top of me for
11 two months. And, so then I went to the office and
12 I took my granddaughter so she can interpret for
13 me. But the rent, they want it on time and they
14 want it ready. I feel that this is not fair. I
15 don't think it's fair and I don't want a rent
16 increase. I'm paying \$1,665 and 42 cents and I've
17 been living there for 20 something years. That is
18 all I wanted to say. Thank you.

19 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you
20 very much.

21 Randy Dillard?

22 FEMALE VOICE 1: You've
23 continuously raised the rent with little to no
24 regard for what people want or people need. You've
25 actually texted at meetings, falling asleep,

1

2 Christina Smith is one. Tonight we heard from our
3 borough president and -- our borough President
4 Gibson and our Councilwoman Sanchez, who beseeched
5 you to reject the proposed rent increases. And why
6 do you think that such busy women would take time
7 to show up at this hearing?

8 Because they know firsthand
9 the struggles that Bronx families are facing with
10 skyrocketing rents in our neighborhoods. They've
11 seen the faces of people who have to choose between
12 basic necessities or paying rent -- or paying
13 higher rent. So now that nothing is left in
14 Brooklyn or Queens, they've come to the Bronx, but
15 the Bronx is not for sale. We will fight.

16 (Audience participation.)

17 FEMALE VOICE 1: We'll fight
18 tooth and nail to keep rent affordable in the
19 Bronx. If it means marching, then we'll march. If
20 it means legislative efforts, then we will do that.
21 Together with our Albany representatives. We will
22 reform this mayor's precious RGB. We will ensure
23 --

24 (Audience participation.)

25 FEMALE VOICE 1: Right. We

1
2 will ensure that the members of this Board are
3 chosen fairly by taking away the power to appoint
4 from this mayor or any mayor after that. And many
5 more reforms that will ensure that this Board works
6 for the people and not for solely for the real
7 estate profiteers. So I'm here to tell each of you
8 not to get too comfortable, because the RGB will be
9 reformed and the people united will never be
10 defeated. The people united will never be
11 defeated. The people united will never be
12 defeated. Thank you.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.
15 Our next three speakers will be Delroy Askins,
16 Madeline Mendez and Shantel Adams.

17 Madeline Mendez? Madeline.
18 Madeline. Yes, please.

19 MR. DILLARD: Yes. I'm Randy
20 Dillard. I live at 1211 Southern Boulevard. I
21 want you to take a good look because you are
22 sitting in the Bronx tonight because our
23 organization fought for you to come from Manhattan
24 up here to hear our voices. That's why you're here
25 in the Bronx. And we had to fight for you to hear

1

2 our voices and our needs are why a landlord do not
3 need a rent increase. My landlord owns 980
4 buildings and my building has 200 violations.

5 Now, what you all need to do
6 before you come here, is to meet with some of us
7 organizations and councilmen and the borough
8 presidents and go into these buildings and see the
9 conditions that they're living up under. Before
10 you vote on a rent increase, go into the bathroom
11 where someone has to sit on the toilet and have
12 Amarillo raised up so it don't leak down up on
13 them. Go into a building where there are sticky
14 traps and mice traps and parents have to make sure
15 that their baby don't get bit by rats and stuff.

16 We can bring you into these
17 buildings so you can see the conditions that
18 everybody is talking to you about tonight. And
19 make sure that if you're gonna vote for a rent
20 increase, tell all of these landlords to clear up
21 their violations first.

22 (Audience participation.)

23 MR. DILLARD: We are human
24 beings. We didn't cause the pandemic and the
25 pandemic caused us to lose jobs, caused us to lose

1

2 family members. And now they're rushing us in the
3 court for non-payments because the tenants didn't
4 get bailed out, but big businesses and everybody
5 else got bailed out. But the tenants didn't get
6 bailed out.

7 Now, before you make a
8 decision, you take a good look. Because one thing
9 we know that you say, we just don't want to pay our
10 rent. We are liars. No, we're not. We are
11 working class people. We take care of our families
12 and everybody.

13 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

14 MR. DILLARD: So when you get
15 ready to vote, think about everything that you
16 heard tonight. Fight, fight, fight!

17 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18 MR. DILLARD: Fight, fight,
19 fight. Fight, fight, fight.

20 (Audience participation.)

21 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

22 Thank you very much. All right. Madeline Mendez.
23 Thank you.

24 MS. MENDEZ: My name is
25 Madeline Mendez and I'm from 167th on the Grand

1

2 Concourse Highbridge, that's my community. And in
3 my community -- I mean, let me -- in my community,
4 my community is a working hard community. They
5 don't make much, they struggle. And for you to
6 raise the rent up to my -- to my community, it's
7 going to be devastating for them. I just want to
8 know something, how many of you all have solar
9 energy? How many of you all have solar energy?

10 Oh, no answer, right? Because
11 I'm pretty sure some of you all got houses.
12 Because where I'm from, 167 from the Grand
13 Concourse, we don't have solar energy. So our
14 light bill, our gas bill is like 200, 300. We
15 can't afford that. All right? My landlord,
16 Charles Washington, he's a slum lord, okay? How I
17 got to fix my building that I've been living there
18 for the last 31 years, I have to get tenants to
19 call 311 on him because he did -- when I moved in,
20 he didn't give hot water, heat, none of that.

21 And in university, he was on
22 the news because he wasn't giving no gas, you know?
23 But all I'm saying is there's people on the food
24 line. Have you ever been on the food line? People
25 standing there for hours on the food line and it's

1
2 getting worse because everything is so high. And
3 not only that, I live right across the street from
4 housing court and people are getting evicted. And
5 you're raising the rent? You all agreeing on that?
6 I'm going to remember all your faces. I'm going to
7 remember all your faces.

8 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9 MS. MENDEZ: That's all I got
10 to say because I'm going through it too. My
11 community, I'm here for my community and for
12 myself, but I'm going to remember all of you all.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.
15 Shantel Adams?

16 MS. ADAMS: Good evening. The
17 last thing the Bronx needs is a rent increase.
18 Tenants are already suffering from infested
19 apartments, neglectful land, landlords, and
20 unlivable wages. In my apartment, my mother and I
21 suffered from extreme water damage. Our whole
22 living room ceiling was concave for months and it
23 took six months for us to just get in contact with
24 our landlord to ask for repairs. I hear rats
25 running in the walls at night.

1
2 There's an extreme issue going
3 on here. People cannot afford rent. People can't
4 even afford to eat. Do we even -- do we not
5 deserve safe and comfortable housing? Families are
6 being displaced. We urge you to rethink your
7 decision in the rent increase. Do not partake in
8 the continued displacement of Native New Yorkers.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.
11 Our next three speakers -- can we get a mic over
12 here, is Gereamo Jordan, Maria Suero, and Julius
13 Bennett. Sir, do you need a mic over there? Okay.
14 One moment.

15 MR. JORDAN: My name is
16 Gereamo (phonetic) Jordan.

17 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18 MR. JORDAN: And I have to say
19 that whenever my apartment rent increased, my
20 affordability decreased. I want to say that I
21 don't understand how we can call it rent
22 stabilization when something increase every year.
23 Because when something is stabilized, don't move.
24 In other words, it's a like a rent freeze. But we
25 don't have a rent freeze, we have a rent increase.

1

2 Everything goes up all the time; year after year.

3

4 So I don't understand that
5 name of that program called stabilization, because
6 we have to look for another name, like a
7 non-preferential rent or something like that. Not
8 rent stabilization, because as I see like I've been
9 fooled. See? Year after year, it is an increase,
10 not reducing, not decreasing; increasing. You see
11 the terminology is different. That's all I have to
12 say.

12

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

Maria. Suero? Suero, excuse me. Thank you.

14

15 MR. ASKINS: Thank you for
16 coming. My name is Delroy Askins and I'm here to
17 support Casa. Casa!

17

(Audience participation.)

18

19 MR. ASKINS: So I don't think
20 it should be a -- I believe that there should be a
21 rent rollback for two reasons. One is because
22 where I live there's an infestation of roaches and
23 all kinds of bugs in my building, and it gets into
24 the apartment and everywhere you go, whether it is
25 to buy food or to the hardware store to buy roach
spray, the prices is just ridiculous. They

1

2 doubling and they're tripling anywhere you go.
3 Everything is all about the prices are up because
4 of the pandemic.

5 And I'm asking you guys that
6 because of the so-called pandemic, that there
7 shouldn't be an increase because things are so high
8 not only for me, I'm sure it's high for you guys
9 too and everybody that's here. In addition to
10 that, my little niece, she lives in the -- a
11 building where they have black mold. She's a young
12 mother that's dealing with two kids. Single mother
13 and black mold is everywhere in her apartment and
14 she can't get any help.

15 The landlord is not doing
16 anything and they are continuing to say, "Hey,
17 we're going to meet you. We're going to meet you,
18 we're going to meet you." But they never come to
19 the apartment to get anything done. And I'm asking
20 you guys to please do not increase the rent. We
21 deserve a rent rollback.

22 (Audience participation.)

23 CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.
24 Thank you. Maria Suero. Has Maria spoken? Okay.
25 Oh, that's pretty right. Thank you

1
2 MS. SUERO: Good evening. I'm
3 Maria Suero. So I'm here representing many of the
4 residents of the Bronx that were not able to come
5 today because of certain disabilities that they
6 have. So my sister lives in the building next door
7 to me. I live at 1005 Watson and the -- my
8 landlord bought the building next door. So that's
9 where my sister lives. So my sister has been
10 dealing with rats, not little baby mice, like rats,
11 big rats. So they eat her rice and the last thing
12 they did was they ate the rubber plastic part from
13 under the refrigerator.

14 So that's how we're living in
15 the Bronx. And I'm here asking you to not support
16 landlords. You guys are lawyers and you have, you
17 know, decent housing and things like that. Well,
18 we don't. And so I retired three years ago, but I
19 have continued working because what I earn is still
20 not enough for me to pay the \$1,300 in rent.

21 I'm going to read or tell you
22 two passages from the Bible. So it's easier for a
23 camel to go through the eye of a needle as opposed
24 to a rich person being able to get into heaven.

25 (Audience participation.)

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MS. SUERO: The thing is that Judge -- God judges everyone. So it doesn't matter rich, poor, black, white. In New York, this is how it's going to be. And even to get up there, that's God that's going to be passing judgment on all of us.

(Audience participation.)

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you. We are going to take a brief recess and we'll be back shortly. And registration closes at 8:00 p.m., so please make sure to sign up before 8:00. Thank you, we'll be right back.

(Audience participation.)

(A recess was taken.)

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: All right. Our next three speakers will be John Hill, Devlin Williams, and Ramon Gonzales.

THE AUDIENCE: Can you repeat that?

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: John Hill, Devlin Williams, and Ramon Gonzalez.

(Audience participation.)

FEMALE VOICE 2: Hello, the gentleman in the hat, the sombrero. He said his

1

2 name was called, but three people went instead of
3 him. Julius Bennett.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Oh, okay.

5

Mr. Bennett, please. Thank you

6

FEMALE VOICE 2: Mr. Bennett,

7

to speak?

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: He was

9

signed up earlier.

10

FEMALE VOICE 2: Yeah to --

11

for him to speak?

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I think

13

so, yeah. Way earlier. Yeah. Go ahead please,

14

Mr. Bennett.

15

(Audience participation.)

16

MR. BENNETT: Good evening.

17

Tonight, I do not intend to deliver an exercise in

18

futility. I'd like to cut to the chase. I'd like

19

to say to the Board, thank you for having us. But

20

I'd like to say, that you all know why we are here.

21

You all know the conditions we live in. One, I was

22

here last year and we recited it then, and we

23

recanted it the year prior to that. America is in

24

a bad way. Which helps to include our housing

25

problem. The problem has to be fixed by fixing

1

2 those things which caused us to be America.

3

I'm reminded of three

4

documents, The Constitution of the United States,

5

The Declaration of Independence, The Emancipation

6

Proclamation. These items talk about the rights of

7

the people. It talks about the development of the

8

government, the running of the government, and what

9

it is for. It also tells us that when the

10

Government does not serve the people, then the

11

people have the right to dissolve the Government.

12

(Audience participation.)

13

MR. BENNETT: I'm here to say

14

to the Board, we understand the composition of the

15

Board. We understand what each segment of the

16

Board represents. The Board is set up in such a

17

way that we cannot win this battle. And it doesn't

18

have to be a battle. It should be the same as an

19

election. That there's a vote set up that there's

20

an opportunity for either side to win. We are

21

designed to be on the failure side of America. I

22

can't tolerate it anymore. I won't lead in that

23

direction anymore. Now, what I say to us, if we,

24

as this room was filled before, would multiply our

25

numbers exponentially by November 5th. Get out to

1

2 vote.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

MR. BENNETT: Put the people

5

in place who are going to do what the people want.

6

And that is us. Get up America, get all your

7

friends out --

8

(Audience participation.)

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

10

MR. BENNETT: -- bring them

11

out, let's vote. Let's change the --

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

MR. BENNETT: -- constitution

14

of this Board, and let's have America function on

15

behalf of we the People.

16

(Applause.)

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18

John Hill?

19

Devlin Williams? Thank you.

20

MR. WILLIAMS: God bless you,

21

and good evening, everyone. People of the panel,

22

we advise we would like you to not only to hear us,

23

but to listen with understanding. To open the eyes

24

of your heart. To understand that each and every

25

person here is not a complaint, but a cry for help.

1

2 Amen.

3

4 We come here to ask you for a
5 rent rollback. I myself have been homeless since
6 2015. I work two jobs. I work really hard, I
7 volunteer, I do church work, I work with children.
8 I've been told after applying for apartment after
9 apartment, that my low-income is too low for
10 low-income housing. Again, we're asking for rent
11 rollback. Your rent is way too high.

12

13 When I'm applying for
14 low-income housing and they're still telling me
15 with two jobs that I cannot afford low-income
16 housing. Please hear us with your hearts. These
17 are not complaints. These are cries for help. We
18 need your help. The people need your help. You're
19 killing us. Please rent rollback. Thank you very
20 much.

21

(Applause.)

22

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

23

Ramon Gonzalez? Thank you.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

MR. GONZALEZ: All right. I'm
going to do the best that I can, seeing all you
guys out there. I've been in the Bronx since 1965.

1

2 I've seen a lot. I came when I was 15 years old.
3 There are a lot of things out there. Landlords
4 will not have a building with no tenants. I drove
5 a school bus for 30 years. I feel proud of it.

6 I would say one thing, maybe a
7 few things. We have new buildings. They're
8 supposed to be low-income. Some of them I've been
9 to -- where I go -- where they look for me for an
10 apartment. I'm 73 years old. I'm a lucky guy. I
11 get good social security. I'm lucky. A lot of us
12 are here, they are really struggling and I feel bad
13 for them. I don't use a cane to walk. I don't use
14 a walker. God bless America.

15 The Bronx has always been The
16 Bronx. It's getting better and better. But these
17 landlords, they get away with it. How? I don't
18 know. These judges out there, what are they doing?
19 They're not doing their job. Certain kids beat up
20 four cops and let them go. Why? Where's justice?
21 That's not justice.

22 I hate to say this,
23 Immigration is out here; all these people for
24 immigration. Everyone needs help. Everyone is a
25 human being, regardless if he got millions or if he

1

2 got a few dollars; you are a human being. And I
3 believe in that. And I believe in God. I always
4 ask God. If I didn't ask him, I wouldn't be here.
5 I have three heart attacks. 20 or so think and I'm
6 here. And God bless because I ask God for it.
7 Thank you --

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9

MR. GONZALEZ: -- for

10 listening and you have a good night.

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

12 so much.

13

(Applause.)

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next

15 three speakers are Yaslen Gomez (phonetic), Anna

16 Galvez (phonetic), and Jarvin Samuel (phonetic).

17

MS. GOMEZ: Good evening to

18 everyone. My name is Yaslen Gomez. Perhaps you

19 know me and the rest of us because all of us here

20 in the Bronx are black, but a lot of us are very

21 proud of that. I've been coming to this place now

22 for more than seven years. And I would like for

23 you to know that you're going to have to keep

24 putting up with us. So sorry for you all guys.

25

I know that you don't want to

1

2 be here looking at all these Black and Latino
3 people. But you're paid to be here. And we're
4 not, because look at this. When I was leaving my
5 apartment, guess what I found? Look. A picture of
6 my neighbor who's actually being evicted today, as
7 a matter of fact. And that, of course, doesn't
8 hurt you, but it does hurt me. That's my neighbor.

9 I was actually asking someone
10 a few minutes ago, who is that lady sitting there
11 in the corner? And of course I said she has to be
12 a building owner. Because the attitude that she's
13 displaying at that table is embarrassing.

14 I'm not coming here to tell
15 you that there are cockroaches. I'm not coming
16 here to tell you that there are mice or there are
17 rats in our building. I'm not coming here to tell
18 you that the landlords are not making any of
19 repairs. You know all of that. In fact, you have
20 everything set so that you can make the rent
21 increase again this year. Do you not have a
22 conscious?

23 Please don't come back to the
24 Bronx. Because next time you do come here, you're
25 going to find out how tired we are. I know you're

1

2 afraid of us. Because we don't just sit back and
3 take it.

4

I know you were pushed to
5 being here tonight. But I'm sorry about that.

6

You're going to keep seeing our faces. And even if
7 you keep at it, there will always be tenants here
8 at Bronx Community College asking for our rights.
9 Because living is -- housing is a right.

10

You should be sitting here and
11 we should be sitting up there. That's what we
12 should do. You should come down here, and we
13 should be up there, so you can feel what it is to
14 spend days with no food. I know what that feels
15 like when I have no -- where I work in a store,
16 from 5:00 a.m. in the morning to 5:00 p.m. and not
17 to take food home. Here, sit with us, so that you
18 can see how it feels.

19

Ladies and gentlemen, I know
20 you're going to increase the rate because the Mayor
21 is an owner and he bought all of you guys out and
22 brought you here. But you're going to continue
23 having to listen to us. I'm sorry. Whether you
24 want to or not. The Bronx is here and we're ready
25 to fight. Please, don't be so abusive. Please

1

2 reduce the rent.

3

(Audience participation.)

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Gracias.

5

MS. GALVEZ: Hello. How are

6 you? My name is Anna Galvez. I'm here before you,

7 looking at each and every one of you. And I hope

8 that you're all looking at me as well. Normally, I

9 speak very loudly. But today I promise not to

10 scream or get too excited. Because they always say

11 that, "The way in which you ask for things is the

12 way that you will be retributed for that."

13

I know that all of you are

14 tired of listening to the same stories. I also

15 know that many of you are there because you're all

16 very well educated. You know what? I congratulate

17 you for that because perhaps your parents are doing

18 the same work that I as a mother with -- I do with

19 my daughter. And hopefully she will also be

20 sitting at a place just like you're doing, so

21 today, in the future.

22

Do you know what's my major --

23 what makes me the saddest? The fact that my

24 daughter is able to hear at the age of 12 what it

25 is to work and to fight. She's making these little

1
2 bracelets. And she's selling them in her school,
3 so that she can help me pay the rent. Do you think
4 that that's fair? That a child who should be more
5 worried about his or her studies, is now more
6 worried with paying the rent?

7 (Audience participation.)

8 MS. GALVEZ: That is not fair.
9 I'm sure you're tired of hearing that buildings
10 where there are no repairs being made, right?
11 Because a few friends of yours don't make those
12 repairs. But I ask myself, what New York is it
13 that you live in? Because the one I live in, is
14 literally a dump. We're raising rats. The rats
15 live in our buildings. They eat our food. I'm the
16 one that's feeding them.

17 You know, I don't know if it's
18 a pet, or if it's a child, I don't know what it is.
19 But I invite you all. Yes, I invite you all to sit
20 at my dinner table so that you eat on top of rat
21 toppings. I invite you to my home. I invite you
22 to take a walk on 3rd Avenue.

23 I told a friend of mine where
24 there are apartments for 1, 400 you take your 2000
25 dollars. How many of these do you think my

1

2 daughter will have to pay or sell for me to be able
3 to pay this rent? Please, be aware of this. We're
4 not asking for something for you to give this to
5 us. We just do not want any more increases. Thank
6 you so much. I could spend all night here, trying
7 to convince all of you. But your conscious and God
8 will do that. Thank you.

9

(Applause.)

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11

Yes. I think we're hearing next from Jarvin Samuel

12

and then Marilyn Delone (phonetic), Sochit Herrera

13

(phonetic), and Karen Berez (phonetic). Thank you.

14

MS. SAMUEL: Hello, my name is

15

Jarvin Samuel. And I'm here with CASA. I've been

16

living at -- I live at 1230, Woodycrest Avenue and

17

I've been there for 18 years. And the conditions

18

in the building has gotten worse since I've been

19

there. This landlord is the worst. Several times

20

our elevator has been broken and we have people

21

that's disabled in the building, can't come down

22

when the elevator's broken.

23

We have mice in the building.

24

I have mice in my apartment. And no matter what I

25

do, I can't get rid of them. They still come back.

1

2 I got mice and cockroaches and the repairs is
3 inaccurate. They'll do repair, then repair -- the
4 things come right back. Whatever they patch up,
5 will come right back. And I'm speaking for all the
6 tenants in my building and all the other tenants
7 that's here.

8 I think that you don't even
9 care about us, because when we leave here, I know
10 you're going to vote on the landlord's side because
11 you've been doing that ever since. You always vote
12 for the increases.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 MS. SAMUEL: You don't care
15 about how we live. Would you like your children to
16 live in our conditions? No. Do you think -- do --
17 how could you all sleep at night? How could you
18 sleep at night the way you -- way these people are
19 being treated, that we are being treated? No, they
20 sleep very well because they don't care.

21 (Audience participation.)

22 MS. SAMUEL: That's right.
23 They don't have mice and cockroaches in their
24 apartments.

25 (Audience participation.)

1

2

MS. SAMUEL: They got a lot --

3

and the conditions are just -- it is just getting

4

worse. And the landlord needs to -- they need to

5

do something. And it shouldn't be no winning

6

peace. Okay? I would like to say that's it.

7

That's all I got to say.

8

(Applause.)

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

10

Marilyn Delone? All right. We'll return to her.

11

MR. MENDEZ: Mr. Speaker, I'm

12

taking her spot.

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay. She

14

needs a microphone?

15

MR. MENDEZ: No, I'm taking

16

her spot. Okay.

17

MR. MENDEZ: I am her

18

40-year-old nephew and I can get to --

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Can we let

20

him testify? I'm sorry. And can you tell us your

21

name?

22

MR. MENDEZ: My name is Skylar

23

Mendez.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

MR. MENDEZ: My voice is very

1

2 loud. I do not need a mic. I just need a
3 translator. One question, now out of everybody in
4 this room -- this is the question I need
5 translated, please. Out of the people in this
6 room, how many are you on fixed income?

7

(Audience participation.)

8

MR. MENDEZ: By show of hands,
9 (foreign language)? Now you see the room. I'm one
10 of them. I'm 29 years old, ripping off of my
11 mother's (unintelligible). I don't get a fixed
12 amount. I do not like rented pieces. But I'm
13 willing to do devil's attitude. Make a move, make
14 something where they won't get a rent increase or
15 the landlord has to go. Something. Because we are
16 in year four after the pandemic.

17

Year two, okay was a struggle.
18 Year three, okay we struggled a lot. Year four
19 (unintelligible). This month I had to evaluate
20 which one should I do first? No. That, I'm going
21 to save income. I don't have to pick and choose.
22 I get this till the day I die. I don't want to be
23 a part of the next generational troubles. And it
24 is astronomically dumbfounding. The people in here
25 are three times my age and they're struggling. I

1

2 can only imagine me, growing up. It's nothing but
3 worse. Now --

4

(Audience participation.)

5

6 MR. MENDEZ: -- wait, I'm not
7 done. I only got 10 seconds. I'm trying to make
8 it brief. Each and every one of you on that Board
9 has a retirement age. How would you like it when
10 you retire, your income that you work hard for is
11 not enough for sustainable living.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

13 MR. MENDEZ: Wait, wait, wait,
14 wait. Sustainable living is what we all fight for.

14

(Audience participation.)

15

16 MR. MENDEZ: From 16 going
17 forward. That's why we pay our taxes. That's why
18 we ask the government for help to get the taxes
19 done right. If we get no close to stability after
20 we retire, then what's the point of retiring me?

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21

22 MR. MENDEZ: Even the 4.8 or
23 that stuff. If it's not sustainable, what's the
24 point?

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25

(Audience participation.)

1

2

MR. MENDEZ: Wait, wait, wait.

3

Now I don't care which way you may vote for. You

4

may vote yes, you may vote no. But know this,

5

(unintelligible). Everybody has an ending.

6

Everybody retires. Everybody has what's known as a

7

fixed income. No matter what or where you're from.

8

No matter the state either. I don't care really,

9

like I said, whether you pick or choose. Just --

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11

MR. MENDEZ: -- have the

12

courage, the decency, the overall mindset of the

13

future. My future is --

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

15

MR. MENDEZ: -- in your hands.

16

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

17

MR. MENDEZ: Please.

18

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

19

(Audience participation.)

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Marilyn

21

Delone. Oh, yes, please go ahead. Thank you.

22

Okay, one second.

23

MS. BEREZ: Good evening, Rent

24

Guidelines Board --

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Oh, one

1

2 second ma'am. Sorry.

3

MS. BEREZ: Yes.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We had one

5

other speaker here first.

6

MS. BEREZ: Oh, I'm sorry.

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

8

so much. Can we get this mic on, please?

9

MS. DELONE: I got it.

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

11

so much.

12

MS. DELONE: Mic check. Hi.

13

Good evening. My name is Marilyn Delone. I reside

14

on ZIP code 10452; meaning low-income. A lot of

15

people here have fixed income. However, I don't

16

want to talk about the fixed income now. I want to

17

talk about the essential workers. They never got a

18

break. They're the ones that are here. The

19

essential workers didn't get poor. The essential

20

workers didn't qualify for ERAP. They qualified

21

just to continue working, paying the rent that they

22

were paying before. They never got a break; mental

23

or physical.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

MS. DELONE: First of all,

1

2 catching up. We are also need to catch up and we
3 are not able to eat the hot dog. The Ketchup is
4 not there yet.

5 Another thing -- this is the
6 deal, guys. Biden. This is the deal, guys; needs
7 versus want. I'm a teacher, I'm a student. Needs
8 versus wants. That's the way I was taught. I was
9 taught ratio. I didn't know -- I hated ratio. I
10 didn't know what the hell it meant. It's
11 equivalent; it's balance. 1:1, low-income versus
12 high-income rent hike is not equal. It's not
13 equal. It's actually not proportion. Number two,
14 is the fact that needs versus want. We need you to
15 help us afford our living.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank You.

17 MS. DELONE: Mayor Adams --
18 fact check number three, Mayor Adams is a landlord.
19 He's a Democrat? No, he's acting like a
20 Republican. And if he thinks like a duck
21 (unintelligible), he's not a duck. He's actually a
22 landlord. It's a conflict of interest --

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24 MS. DELONE: -- we don't get
25 our vote today. We are then taking a higher places

1

2 because you know why? It's conflict of interest
3 that he's a landlord. We vote for him. He's
4 raising our rent. That's not help --

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6 MS. DELONE: -- no, rent
7 rollback is on the ballot. Rent rollback is on the
8 ballot. You don't vote today you're sick. This is
9 an election year. Therefore, if you guys don't
10 vote for us, we'll sit on the employment line.
11 Rent rollback is on the ballot.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13 MS. DELONE: Thank you.

14 (Audience participation.)

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

16 (Audience participation.)

17 MS. BEREZ: Rent rollback.

18 Good evening, tenants. Good evening, Rent
19 Guidelines Board. My name is Karen. I am
20 organizer for Rent Stabilized Tenants in the Bronx.
21 And we see a lot of cases tonight. But we also
22 have to analyze, right? What landlords get away
23 with, right? They get away with not paying
24 property taxes for really high amounts. I
25 organized a building where a landlord owed 25

1

2 million in property taxes.

3 (Audience participation.)

4 MS. BEREZ: But tenants can't

5 miss rent. And that's something that they get

6 penalized for like month after month. We have HCR

7 that's overworked. Six, like three months, you

8 submit a rent reduction and you -- the landlord

9 doesn't even have to like update it in your lease.

10 So, these are the things that

11 our tenants are facing and the systems like the

12 agencies, they're overworked. I think we need to

13 analyze this and really, really consider a rent

14 rollback because we are over -- we are work

15 burdened, we are burdened spiritually, we're

16 burdened with work. So, please, please consider

17 rent rollback. Thank you so much.

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

19 (Audience participation.).

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next

21 three speakers are Catherine Wilson (phonetic),

22 Ingozi Abina (phonetic), and Sabrina Ortiz

23 (phonetic).

24 Catherine? Thank you.

25 MS. WILSON: I'm Catherine

1

2 Wilson. I know on the Board right now, I know
3 there's what representatives for the landlord,
4 representatives for the tenants, the mayor. I'm
5 going to say this, in 2020, when you all said, oh,
6 we didn't have to have a raise. The landlord still
7 raised our rent. I'm going to show -- I'm not
8 going to get up here and I'm not going to say, oh,
9 I got a landlord. He's not bad, but he's horror.

10 I wanted to show you pictures
11 that when you give a landlord some clout and you
12 raise that rent, they don't always do what they
13 have to do. They don't bring it back to the
14 neighborhood. They don't bring it back to the
15 building.

16 First of all, I feel like when
17 you raise the rent and you don't give it back to
18 us, what's the problem? Because, if I pay my rent
19 every month and I pay my rent every month, and I
20 just looked at my rent receipt today and I said,
21 how do I get a balance on my rent if I pay every
22 month? So, I went in my rent office and I said,
23 how do I get a balance on my rent if I pay you all
24 every month? They was like, "Oh, I don't know, Ms.
25 Wilson."

1
2 Well, I'm laughing. I'm like,
3 you all know you all never going to get this right,
4 because I pay my rent every month. I'm trying to
5 tell you all that, landlords are very tricky. They
6 was tricky in 2020. They're tricky now. And they
7 always been tricky. They don't do what they
8 supposed to do. You all people give them loans and
9 they don't do what they still going to do. And if
10 you all give them a raise, all they going to do is
11 mess with us again.

12 I was going to say something
13 and I know this, I could tell she's bored on the
14 end. She's tired of hearing us and I can tell all
15 of you all just want to say -- I'm not going to
16 talk about that, but I'm just going to say, we need
17 to roll back that rent, we need to roll back that
18 rent. And you all need to punish them for what
19 they did to us in 2020. And you all need to punish
20 them now and let them know, stop tricking the
21 tenants.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MS. ABINA: Fight, fight,
25 fight.

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

MS. ABINA: Fight, fight,

4

fight.

5

(Audience participation.)

6

MS. ABINA: Good evening,

7

everybody. My name is Ingozi Abina. I'm a member

8

of CASA. You all see us last year. We are back

9

again this year. We begging you people to help us

10

to rent roll back.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

MS. ABINA: Because we are

13

suffering. Look at my son he is supposed to be

14

right now going to bed, but he said, mommy, I will

15

go with you, so, we'll go fight. Because he had

16

that -- every time he had that fight, fight, fight.

17

I said, yes, let's go fight. Because you fight

18

your way. You fight your way! You firght your

19

way!

20

(Audience participation.).

21

MS. ABINA: I'm telling

22

everybody here because my bible say, "Ask it shall

23

be given." I'm just asking them to help us. To do

24

it for us. Because see, I'm asking for you to give

25

it to me. I'm seeking for you to find for me. So,

1

2 please do it for us. We give up already. We're
3 tired.

4

Look at all these old ladies.
5 I'm leaping. I don't want to climb this step.
6 That's why, I tell them, let me start walking
7 little by little. People are suffering. Landlord
8 don't care about us. If you look at our houses,
9 you say, why am I living here? I know where you
10 people living. You're living in heaven on earth.
11 But we're here, we're living in hell. But we
12 didn't go out there yet. Because they're not
13 taking care of us. You pay your rents.

14

People -- I don't know you
15 people. People are begging for pay their -- to
16 suffer, to pay their rent. I pay my rent. I don't
17 owe my landlord anything. But when you ask them
18 fulfill something, they don't want to fulfill
19 something for you. You have children moving all
20 over the place. You have everything to beg them to
21 come and do it. Until you hold their rent -- when
22 you hold their rent, they will show you the
23 eviction notice. It don't supposed to be eviction
24 notice because you didn't fix my stuff.

25

I told them about the

1

2 technical court, I'm ready for all of you. So,
3 please rent rollback is that's why we are here, and
4 freeze off whatever we are asking you people for.
5 Please, please, please, please. Thank you.

6

(Audience participation.)

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

Sabrina Ortiz?

9

MS. ORTIZ: Good evening. My

10

name is Sabrina Ortiz. I'm here with CASA. I'm

11

not going to, you know, reiterate what everyone has

12

said already so far. But I'm going to tell you a

13

little bit about my story, okay?

14

I was a renter for six years.

15

Right now I'm homeless. Not because I don't pay

16

rent or because I'm not a hardworking person, but I

17

had a fire in December of 2022. It took an entire

18

year of fighting the system for the judge to tell

19

me that I needed to leave. An entire year. It

20

shouldn't take an entire year.

21

On top of that, going to

22

non-profits to try and get information to maybe get

23

some type of counsel, it's really like trying to

24

find a needle on a haystack. And it is this same

25

exact so-called resource for the 10,000 non-profits

1

2 that we have in New York City. That is ridiculous.
3 We should be able to have way more resources for
4 taxpaying citizens.

5 I've been working since the
6 age of 14. Next week I'll be 44. That means I
7 have dedicated over 25 years to the workforce
8 corporate to try and provide for my family. And
9 then when I have the -- the utmost, you know, life
10 changing arrangements in my life, I can't get any
11 resources. I've paid for thousands and thousands
12 of people to have the resources that I was never
13 provided. And that's not fair. I have worked
14 really hard, not just --

15 (Audience participation.)

16 MS. ORTIZ: -- please wait, I
17 haven't just worked a 9:00 to 5:00. I have worked
18 9:00 to 9:00 because I am the provider of my family
19 in my household. On top of that, I had a fire,
20 okay? That was in December 8th, to be exact, of
21 2022 while I was, you know, going to see my uncle
22 in ICU on his death bed.

23 The reason why I bring that up
24 is because a year prior, my mother, a senior
25 citizen, was illegally evicted. Every item that

1
2 she has owned for the 65 years of her life, was
3 thrown in the trash. Do you think that that
4 landlord was reprimanded for that? Do you think
5 that he recuperated all of the family heirlooms
6 that he trashed? Because I spoke to other tenants
7 in the building and they saw all of my mom's
8 belongings in the trash. To this day, it has not
9 been rectified. This is three years later, okay?
10 So I have to -- I'm not going to -- no one on the
11 panel would allow their parent to be homeless on
12 the street, okay? So, I had to take my mother in.
13 One year later, I have a fire and then I -- living
14 there sixty years, not one single repair. Luckily
15 I have worked in property management.

16 So, I do know how to do my own
17 repairs. Do you think that I got a rent reduction
18 for doing my own repairs? No, I didn't. I had to
19 fight every time there was a leak or something of
20 sort to -- for it to get done and never got done.
21 The refrigerator gave out. It was never repaired.
22 Two months --

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24 MS. ORTIZ: -- I went and had
25 to purchase the refrigerator. I'm going to -- I

1

2 know you guys want to go, but the point that I'm
3 trying to make here is that the tenants have to be
4 responsible adults, right? We have to do
5 everything in -- on our part, but the landlords do
6 not get the same. And they need to. The
7 violations should not pass a certain amount in a
8 building before it gets repaired. We shouldn't
9 have to call 311 10,000 times --

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11 MS. ORTIZ: -- for them to get
12 repairs. We shouldn't have to call ombudsman or
13 all of the senates for them to come and finally get
14 something done. When they're getting paid, they
15 get pulled out of all types of financial situations
16 and none of us have gotten --

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18 MS. ORTIZ: -- pulled out of
19 those financial situations. Things need to change.
20 I'm not begging and I'm not asking, oh, I'm not
21 pleading either because I'm a tax paying citizen
22 and it is our right to have a decent living space.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24 (Audience participation.)

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

1

2 We have our next three speakers, are Jezidia Veyez
3 (phonetic), Eucharist Pimento (phonetic), and
4 Mercedes Escorto (phonetic).

5 MS. JASMINE: Hi, my name is
6 pronounced Jesenya Veyez. Yeah, thank you. Hello,
7 RGB. My name is Jesenya Jasmine and I am a
8 representative of Diaspora Atlantic Collective,
9 which is a collective of Puerto Ricos, advocating
10 for the liberation of Puerto Rico.

11 We are here in solidarity with
12 the tenants of the Bronx, who are like the natives
13 of Bodikin (phonetic), also known as Puerto Rico,
14 are facing gentrification and displacement at the
15 benefit of rich transplants who do not care about
16 the community.

17 You've heard from testimonies
18 of people who live under despicable housing
19 conditions and landlords who do not care about the
20 sanctity of these people. And why don't they care?
21 Because we are being let down by them. In the same
22 way we are being let down by our mayor, by local
23 officials who hold the interest of wealthy real
24 estate (unintelligible) who care about profit; we
25 do people. Exactly.

1
2 Oh, who's the landlord? Eric
3 Adams? Yeah, Eric Adams is the number one landlord
4 in New York City, and he unlike the local
5 officials, are responsible for every single rent
6 hike that is a direct attack on the dignity and
7 wellbeing of the families, of the friends, and the
8 neighborhoods -- neighbors, sorry, of the
9 community. Rent increases do not come with
10 improved living conditions.

11 In fact, as rents climb,
12 landlords continue to neglect our homes, subjecting
13 us to pus infections, improper plumbing and
14 crumbling infrastructure. They continue to do this
15 because they know if we demand safe housing
16 conditions in court, we will fight alone.

17 In 2023, 50, 000 New Yorkers
18 faced their course -- their cases alone. If you're
19 unable to afford \$3, 000 of rent, how do you expect
20 them to afford attorney fees to have rightful
21 representation in the court when it is not
22 appointed to them? It is not given to them by the
23 city. As my colleague just mentioned, she's a
24 taxpaying citizen. Representation should be given
25 with taxation.

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

(Audience participation.)

4

MS. JASMINE: Landlords do not

5

invest back into the community and force us to live

6

in unsafe and inhumane housing conditions, which is

7

an assault on our right to live without fear of

8

being driven out of our homes and into the streets.

9

We are here to demand that housing be treated as a

10

human right, not as a commodity to be exploited for

11

the benefit of capitalists, not for the commodity

12

to be exploited by you as well.

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

14

MS. JASMINE: You are

15

appointed to represent the people and give them

16

fair housing.

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18

MS. JASMINE: People live

19

here. Families are created here. Friendships are

20

cemented here and communities are cultivated here.

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

22

MS. JASMINE: All of that

23

becomes lost when we are forced to leave our homes

24

because we can no longer afford to cement our

25

legacies. Because we can't afford the rent.

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Madam, can

3

you please? Thank you.

4

MS. JASMINE: This is unjust

5

-- and I will finish my point before I step down.

6

This is unjust and until the injustices are

7

remedied, we will fight for affordable housing

8

because this is our human right --

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

10

MS. JASMINE: -- and if you do

11

not give it to us, we people fight.

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

(Audience participation.)

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Orin.

15

(Audience participation.).

16

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I'm just

17

going to -- if I could just make a quick reminder.

18

I really appreciate everyone being here. I just

19

want to remind folks that we have many speakers and

20

we want to hear from as many of you as possible in

21

the limited time that we have for the hearing. We

22

understand it may be difficult to say everything

23

you want us to hear in just two minutes, but please

24

understand it's our responsibility to try to make

25

sure that everyone who has taken time to come here

1

2 and testify has a fair opportunity to be heard.

3 Thank you.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

6 MS. PIMENTO: Hello, I'm here
7 representing my building, 1212 Grand Avenue. I've
8 been living there for 30 years. I'm here because
9 I'm tired and I no longer want a rent increase.
10 And we're here fighting so that that doesn't
11 happen. I'm living in an apartment where
12 everything is disgusting. There are rats, there
13 are cockroaches everywhere. No repairs are made
14 and we're pretty much desperate. And it's so
15 unfair that we're paying for such high rents and no
16 repairs are being made.

16

17 For three years now we've been
18 paying for electricity because we don't get any
19 heat. They of course made the repairs, but it
20 doesn't work. I'm 73 years old, and I have two
21 jobs so that I can pay for my rent. So again, I'm
22 here today to ask all of you to please help us with
23 these increases.

23

24 In 30 years that I've been
25 living there, not once have they put a coat of
paint on the wall. Of course everything that's

1

2 been done to the apartment to beautify it has been
3 done by me, but of course now I've stopped doing
4 that. I have nothing else to say, but to please
5 stop all of this and help us.

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7

(Audience participation.)

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Mercedes

9

Escorto? Thank you.

10

MS. ESCORTO: Hello, My name

11

is Mercedes. I'm here representing CASA, I am a

12

CASA leader. I am here also representing myself.

13

I retired two years ago; I worked for the city. I

14

was an essential worker. And of course I have a

15

monthly income. I of course don't make two

16

paychecks a month like I used to, and it's very

17

restricted income at the moment.

18

I told CASA, why don't we seek

19

some way out to have -- actually have some sort of

20

communication or contact with the landlord to see

21

why it is that he fails to make any of the repairs

22

when all of us make our rent payments. My rent is

23

on up to date.

24

I've been living in that

25

building for 16 years now and never have any of the

1

2 repairs been made. I've actually had to make the
3 repairs with my own money. I've had to pay for the
4 paint, for the exterminator. And there were even
5 bedbugs in my apartment. It actually came out to
6 \$700 and I had to pay for two exterminators to come
7 in. I had to pay for a refrigerator. It was
8 damaged and I had to pay and they didn't want to
9 reinstate -- reinstall one.

10

When I started working with
11 CASA, they told me, we will educate you. We will
12 actually teach you what your rights are as a tenant
13 because I had no idea what I was up against with
14 the landlord. I would send messages, I would
15 write, I would call, and never did I get a
16 response. The only kind of communication I would
17 get is once the rent came in -- the rent bill, you
18 have to pay it.

19

There was no laundry room. It
20 wasn't working. I couldn't even bring her down
21 because the laundry room wasn't working. She's 89
22 years old. I have lots of personal expenses. Just
23 take care of my mother, I have 24-hour home health
24 aid expenses. And I had to give up that service
25 because I -- when my rent went up, I had to ask my

1

2 brother to take my mom and take care of her because
3 I couldn't deal with my personal expenses any
4 longer.

5 I was already retired at the
6 time. So, then I started looking up, what are the
7 benefits that someone can actually garner once they
8 purchase a building? Please be aware that the
9 Bronx is actually the borough with the most
10 affordable housing in the city. And this is why
11 homeowners or landlords are purchasing all of these
12 buildings where there are rent-stabilized and
13 rent-controlled apartments.

14 And of course they purchased
15 these properties so that they can make a profit off
16 of them by not making any repairs. And then of
17 course, when we don't make the rent payments, then
18 they ask Housing to remove us from the buildings.
19 But of course, my apartment has all of these
20 repairs because I've been there for so long and
21 I've made the repairs. So I'm losing the money
22 that I'm investing in repairing the apartment. And
23 of course, I'm also spending extra money with my
24 personal expenses to repair this apartment.

25

The rent increase which

1

2 without fail, comes every year. And I even
3 realized that when I moved there, I was charged
4 brokers fees.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6 MS. ESCORTO: And it's the
7 landlord who's supposed to pay for that, not me.
8 In other words. In other words, this is a rip off.
9 This is a rip off.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. ESCORTO: And we're not
13 alone. Do you see these people? They are part of
14 this. The governor is part of this. The mayor is
15 part of this. It's a sham.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

17 MS. ESCORTO: Thank you so
18 much for your attention.

19 (Audience participation.)

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21 Our next three speakers will be Mario Perez
22 (phonetic), Glennis Abreu (phonetic), and Osvaldo
23 Valeria (phonetic).

24 Is Mario Perez here?

25 Glennis? Glennis? Glennis.

1

2 Thank you.

3

Is Glennis Abreu here? Okay.

4

We have a microphone for you. Thank you. One

5

moment though.

6

MS. ABREU: Good evening,

7

everyone and members of the RGB board. Good

8

evening to you all, and members of the Board. I've

9

come here to ask you to please think -- to please

10

think more about us. I am a disabled person and I

11

barely get \$666 a month. I've had several strokes.

12

I am diabetic. I am severely depressed, and I am

13

about to lose my apartment.

14

We need you to take this into

15

consideration all of the time we've worked. I took

16

an oath to this flag. I am a US citizen. And I

17

took an oath because I believe in this country. I

18

took an oath because I believe in all of you.

19

Please, help us. Please think about this, sleep on

20

it. You have no idea what pain it is to lose your

21

home. I'm sure that you live in safe homes. We

22

don't really know how it is that we're living at

23

the moment because every single day we face more

24

here. What if one of these building collapses on

25

us?

1
2 I was the victim of domestic
3 violence. And I'm here. And I'm here living,
4 thinking that I was -- I was going to be -- that
5 justice was going to be afforded to me. Do you
6 have grandchildren? Do you have children? I have
7 grandchildren. I would like for you to know the
8 sake it could be a wonderful day for all of us. It
9 could be a different day for all of us today. I
10 would like for this to be a historic day. Please,
11 think. I need you all to think. There are many
12 officers with us here today.

13 And of course we are orphans,
14 but we have no landlord to look up to. We have no
15 help. I need to have security and I need to know
16 that I have safety where I live when I walk into my
17 building. If they could install a ramp, for
18 example, every -- I have to go down the stairs
19 every single day and there are 120 steps that I
20 need to descend every single day. I also have
21 heart issues. I'm here because I want you to be
22 aware of this and I want you to be conscious about
23 this, with everything that we're living at the
24 moment.

25 When the pandemic occurred, I

1
2 wound up in a psychiatric center. I worked as a
3 home health aid, and now I'm the one with the home
4 health aid. Please, think about us. Please, open
5 your hearts. I need you to please look into your
6 hearts. Not because of me, but because of all of
7 us. They need a voice that need a fair price. We
8 need you to understand. For you to understand us.
9 We need a voice because we can no longer stand for
10 this. We can no longer deal with these rent
11 prices. I'm about to lose my apartment because I'm
12 also ill. I was no longer able to work. And not
13 because I don't want to, but because I am not able
14 to. I wanted you to hear all that. Please open
15 your heart.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes, thank
17 you.

18 MS. ABREU: Please think about
19 us. Tomorrow it might be one of you sitting at
20 that table that that happens to.

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

22 MS. ABREU: Please think
23 about us. Please think about yourselves. We are
24 the ones --

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

1

2 ma'am. Thank you.

3

MS. GLENNIS: Thank you.

4

Thank you. God bless you all.

5

(Audience participation.)

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7

Osvaldo Valeria?

8

Do we have Osvaldo Valeria?

9

(No response.)

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay. Our

11

next three speakers will be Javier Perez

12

(phonetic), Rosa Munoz (phonetic), and Katie Crane

13

(phonetic).

14

MR. PEREZ: Good evening, RGB

15

Board. But if you didn't feel that moment, I don't

16

know if you guys can relate then. I felt it. I

17

know. I live in the community. I live here. I

18

got a personal case here.

19

My name is Javier Perez and

20

I'm the resident and President of the Tenant

21

Association. I had to establish that association

22

to get repairs done. It's working. It's working.

23

I'm here with Rosa Munoz. She's the vice president

24

of the association. We both reside in two of the

25

three buildings. Seven unit -- seven units each

1
2 building equals to 21 units. 21 units of tenants
3 who can't be here present because they're all
4 working class. They are too busy working many
5 hours to pay their skyrocket rents, to put food on
6 their table. I reside in one of those three
7 buildings living with my wife and two daughters for
8 25 years. I'm here advocating for me, my vice
9 president, and the 21 units.

10 Now, Prana Investments is a
11 California company, purchased these three
12 buildings. Prana Investments are the new
13 landlords. They purchased these underperforming
14 buildings for \$4.2 million. Purchased in March of
15 2019. It's a California entity buying up
16 underperforming buildings, also known as Predatory
17 Equity Landlords, interested only in profits.
18 These buildings are directly across from Yankee
19 Stadium, which stands for profit, profit, profit.

20 I know every member of the
21 Board knows that location, location, location
22 equals money. Profits Prominent Investment wants
23 to knock these buildings down to build vertical,
24 excuse me, to build vertical buildings directly
25 from -- excuse me, build. They want market rates

1

2 benefit, they -- to benefit the investors. The
3 buildings are registered under LLC, Limited
4 Liability Co.

5 This business, LLC structure
6 is set up to protect owners from liability for
7 company depths and with impunity. And I give Cathy
8 Hochul, the governor of this State who established
9 the transparency. She signed to law this past
10 December, 2023. The Transparency LLC Act to expose
11 all landlords registered under LLC laws, to prevent
12 landlords them to exploit rent-stabilized tenants.

13 Prana Investment's goal is to
14 frighten their rent-stabilized tenants --

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

16 MR. PEREZ: -- to get scare
17 tactics. And I would like to close this down that,
18 we live in this neighborhood. You hear us out
19 loud, do the right thing. Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

22 Thank you.

23 Rosa Munoz? Okay, thank you.

24 Katie Crane?

25 MS. CRANE: Hi, my name is

1
2 Katie. It's good to be here. Hey, Genesis. It's
3 been a long time. Good to see you. I know we'll
4 get at least one vote, so that's great. Okay, so
5 I'm more here to talk to you guys because
6 realistically they're going to do what they're
7 going to do. And I understand that it is what it
8 is. It's hard to work for the City of New York
9 because you have to sort of pretend to care about
10 the people. At the same time, the city of New York
11 is actively making war on poor people in the
12 working class.

13 Department of Homeless --
14 Department of Homeless Services was deporting
15 homeless people to Newark, New Jersey and
16 Irvington. New Jersey, they were using the special
17 one-time assistance program to essentially deport
18 homeless people so that they could no longer use
19 their benefits. They could not apply for WIC in
20 New York, and they were essentially stuck in
21 Jersey.

22 There also is -- you know,
23 Mayor Adams is very concerned about the impact of
24 rent on small landlords. But small landlords who
25 own less than 10 units are only 13. They only own

1
2 dismantle NYCHA. The plan is to end rent
3 stabilization. I'm out of time, so, I'm going to
4 just wrap up. I'm not here to beg these people and
5 I'm sure some of you want to do the right thing. I
6 know some of you don't care. I'm not here to beg
7 anymore. It is time for massive militant rent
8 strikes. Every building. Every building, fuck
9 this shit. I'm over it.

10 (Audience participation.)

11 MS. CRANE: We're not paying
12 rent. And you know what? Housing Court does not
13 have the staff to evict everyone. We could crash
14 housing court, easily. So that's it. Thank you.

15 (Audience participation.)

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
17 Our next three speakers. Thank you. Our next
18 three speakers will be Ernestina --

19 (Audience participation.)

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
21 Ernestina Vazquez (phonetic), Sarah Delaney
22 (phonetic), and Lela Torres (phonetic).

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MS. VAZQUEZ: What do we want?
25 Justice. So my name is Ernestina. We met each

1
2 other a year ago. We were here about a year ago.
3 So we were here a year ago giving testimony and
4 telling you what we live daily in our homes, right?
5 None of you can imagine what the people of CASA go
6 through. No one can imagine what we've been
7 suffering and or imagine what our children have
8 been going through, or our grandchildren. Do you
9 have grandchildren? You can't imagine like what
10 our children are going through. You can't even
11 imagine, not even a little bit of it. What have
12 our children been going through because of not
13 paying the rent?

14 I have a 15-year-old daughter
15 that I keep things from, and you know what
16 happened? She became depressed because she sees
17 how I suffer. But you guys can't imagine the pain
18 that a mother goes through. I go home, I go to the
19 meetings, but I'm never showing the pain I go
20 through. My daughter became depressed because she
21 sees how I suffer when I go to court to just ask
22 for more time.

23 And now what I have to do is
24 go to therapy and then another therapy and another
25 therapy, ladies and gentlemen. Do you think that's

1

2 fair? Do you think that's fair, CASA? No.

3

4 So just -- panelists, I just
5 have one thing to say. So the same lies that you
6 guys are telling yourselves, like that's what you
7 have to deal with and live with, my daughter is in
8 God's hands. She's become depressed to the point
9 where she wants to cut herself. Do you think
10 that's fair? I'm spending -- I go with her -- I go
11 to therapy with her like four days. I'm wasting my
12 time taking her because I have to take care of her.
13 Do you think that's fair? But the landlords, they
14 don't care. All they want is their money.

14

15 I just would like for you guys
16 to just take even a bit of what we go through, of
17 what we suffer, what we deal with. Who's to blame?
18 Who do you think, panelists, is to blame?

18

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
20 Thank you. Thank you.

20

21 MS. VAZQUEZ: Rent rollback!
22 Rent rollback! Thank you.

22

(Audience participation.)

23

CHAIR DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24

Sarah Delaney?

25

MS. DELANEY: Good evening?

1

2 Hello? Good evening? Can you hear me?

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes.

4

Thank you.

5

MS. DELANEY: All right. I

6

just want to say thank you to all my brothers and

7

sisters who are out here, and I'm praying with and

8

for you and your daughter, young lady, and everyone

9

else in this building. Everyone else in this

10

Bronx, and I'm glad you all are here today. But

11

I'm going to say -- just ask a couple of questions

12

right here. Do you already pay 30 percent or 50

13

percent or more of your incoming rent? Are there

14

maintenance issues in your apartment or your

15

building?

16

From '19 -- from 2019 to 2023,

17

real estate lobbyists spent 1356, 56 million trying

18

to destroy rent stabilization in Albany and in

19

court. And if landlords ever make less than five

20

percent profit, there are programs to help them.

21

Very few have ever applied even when the rent was

22

frozen. That being said, those are just some

23

statistics.

24

My name is Sarah Delaney and I

25

was a non-traditional student here at Houston

1
2 Community College. I was part of the Serrano
3 Scholars, part of the leadership academy, the vice
4 president of the student government, Chair of the
5 student government from 2007 to 2011. I was the
6 president of the nursing program in 2010. I
7 graduated in 2011. I learned how to advocate.
8 This isn't about me, this is about us. I learned
9 to advocate in the leadership academy here for the
10 students, the community, and myself.

11 And now I am once again back
12 at Hostos, fighting again for the rights of New
13 Yorkers, Bronxites and myself. I remember as a
14 young teenager in the late 1970s, when seniors had
15 to eat cat food and dog food so they could pay for
16 their medications, do you? There's an expression
17 that we say, when you cease to remember what has
18 passed, history will once again rear its ugly head.
19 It's happening now.

20 This is the reality. Many New
21 Yorkers are a paycheck away from homelessness.
22 People can't afford to pay their rent. People
23 can't afford to pay much less pay for their homes.
24 What happened to the American dream? It has become
25 the American nightmare. Okay? The community is

1

2 speaking. On my apartment building is in
3 dilapidated conditions. Many apartment buildings
4 in New York; infestations, mold, water issues and
5 open doors, loitering in hallways, mentally
6 unstable individuals, looking for somewhere to stay
7 off the streets, and we are overcrowded.

8

9 It's hard to find when these
10 issues -- it's hard to find a super when these
11 issues arise due to invisible supers. All right?
12 COVID, definitely COVID, impacted all of us.

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

14 MS. DELANEY: Thank you very
15 much. Please allow me to finish. Be respectful
16 with all due respect. COVID is -- COVID impacted
17 all of us and the middle class immensely. I worked
18 through COVID as a single woman. Over one third of
19 my -- over one third of my paycheck was paid in
20 taxes, including all of my overtime. I lost my
21 mother and even I paid my rent while I was working,
22 until I was injured and ultimately fired by New
23 York City Health and Hospitals, okay?

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24

25 MS. DELANEY: I live in a
d-building with many problems, especially the

1

2 elevators. There are 98 units and seven floors
3 with many seniors. All of us are handicapped
4 wheelchairs. What would happen if there were a
5 fire? Two units down? We would all be dead.

6 Okay?

7 The cost of living in New York
8 City does not cover and cannot provide adequate
9 income for the cost -- the owner's cost of living
10 and housing, medical, food, transportation, and
11 life expenses that we must pay. This is an even
12 greater -- there is an even greater divide between
13 the haves and the have nots. Even when working
14 people are suffering and cannot afford these
15 concurrent rent increases.

16 People are physically,
17 mentally, emotionally, financially, and spiritually
18 drained, trying to keep up with the rising costs in
19 New York City, especially the rent.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21 MS. DELANEY: Many have been
22 pushed out or on the verge of eviction due to
23 unaffordable affordable housing.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
25 ma'am.

1

2

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25

MS. DELANEY: The Bronx is the last frontier of gentrification. Stop the eviction and give -- stop the eviction and give us legal representation. My landlord, Wavecrest Management, is one of the largest landlord in New York City with some of the worst building. But yet they have been awarded a \$406 million contract to do renovations and makeovers for Eastchester Gardens in the New York City pack renovations. I find that ludicrous. And as I look around --

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please --

MS. DELANEY: -- I see so many tall building --

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: --

conclude your testimony. Thank you.

MS. DELANEY: -- I see so many tall buildings being pushed into every space that they can in the Bronx which has already been overwhelmed and underserved. The Bronx cannot help or provide adequate services to provide safe, adequate care for hospitals, schools, and neighborhood services. This has to stop. The housing and real estate industry has made 30 to 35 percent profits every year for over 40 years. No

1

2 other industry can say that or has these profit
3 margins.

4

I'm trying to say one thing --

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

6

ma'am.

7

MS. DELANEY: -- I had to

8

fight for masks and supplies during COVID and safe

9

staffing for nurses. And I will fight for

10

increases, to stop increases, then I will fight for

11

housing rights and ask for rent rollbacks. The

12

landlords --

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

14

MS. DELANEY: -- are not

15

losing. The tenants are. The landlords are not

16

losing. Tenants are. No more rent increases. We

17

need a rent rollback. And my last thing is to you

18

all. The RGB --

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

20

ma'am.

21

MS. DELANEY: -- is supposed

22

to take the consideration and the needs of the

23

people when these decisions are being made. Please

24

take your positions seriously. The people have

25

spoken. No rent increases. We demand a rent

1

2 rollback.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

Thank you.

5

MS. DELANEY: God --

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7

MS. DELANEY: -- has kept me.

8

God has kept me alive --

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

10

MS. DELANEY: -- and is still

11

keeping me. And I will.

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

13

--

14

MS. DELANEY: -- continue to

15

fight.

16

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

17

--

18

MS. DELANEY: -- keep climbing

19

up the ladder and keep fighting. When we fight, we

20

win. When we fight, we win.

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

22

MS. DELANEY: The people

23

United will never be defeated. No rent increases.

24

No rent adjustments --

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our --

1

2 MS. DELANEY: -- we demand.

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: -- our
4 next speaker --

5 MS. DELANEY: -- a rent
6 rollback.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
8 Thank you. Thank you.

9 MS. DELANEY: Thank you.

10 (Audience participation.)

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next
12 three speakers will be Lela Torres, Irving Bennett
13 and Sylvia Sanchez.

14 Lela Torres? She's up there.
15 Okay. We need a microphone up there, please. Good
16 evening.

17 MR. IRVING BENNETT: Good
18 evening. My name is Irving Bennett.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Irving.
20 Yeah, later please. Can we grab? Okay, they're
21 running, up with one. Thank you. One moment.
22 Thank you so much for waiting. Oh, sorry, one sec.
23 I thought that was the guy with the microphone.
24 One moment. Okay. Thank you. Sorry.

25 MS. TORRES: I'm Lela Torres.

1

2 Good evening? My name is Lela Torres and I'm a
3 member of CASA. I'm here fighting for -- because
4 us low income New Yorkers are not going to tolerate
5 another rent increase. It's too high and we have
6 other priorities and we -- rent is just, it's too
7 high. I'm 65 years old. Because of my disability
8 and my health issues, I cannot work and I can't
9 continue paying increases in rent.

10 I feel that us, residents of
11 the Bronx, are work -- are hardworking people. And
12 we don't deserve to be discriminated against. I
13 feel that we are discriminated against, we are
14 pushed to the side. We're just left out on the
15 side. And the same way you guys have a safe
16 housing situation, we deserve that as well. We're
17 going through many difficult situations. I'm also
18 talking about all my fellow Bronx residents that
19 also live in deplorable conditions. And we need
20 for you guys to feel your heart and understand that
21 we cannot pay for another rent increase, please.
22 Please take that into consideration.

23 The same way that there are
24 many people in my similar situation. They're not
25 going to have money to pay their rent and where are

1

2 they going to wind up out on the streets or maybe
3 in some shelter or just displaced. And we're going
4 to -- and we're also going to take, and we're also
5 here fighting for the other people that do not have
6 a voice or could not be here. So we're
7 representing them. And I want you to take that
8 into account for all the residents of the Bronx.

9

(Applause.)

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Can you
13 please, bring the microphone back down? Okay,
14 great. Thank you, Lela.

15

MR. IRVING BENNETT: Good
16 evening. My name is Irving Bennett. And I want to
17 talk about the condition, what you hear about
18 before. I know all of you up there are investors.
19 Please, put people before profit. You all invest
20 in buildings. You all come here this evening and
21 exactly know how much you going to raise the rent.
22 Think about the people who -- the children of this
23 city, eviction affect communities.

24

I've been married for 33
25 years. I see a lot of resident let go because of

1

2 They're making money. We are suffering. We are
3 suffering every day.

4 I'm a senior. I say about
5 medicine. I have cancer. I don't have medicine.
6 One injection I took is \$13,000. It cost me \$2,000
7 out of pocket where the insurance don't pay all of
8 that money. So about rent, food - help the food
9 have to go on pantry line to get food. There are
10 food line. I worked 27 years in the city --

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12 MR. IRVING BENNETT: -- in
13 housing.

14 MR. IRVING BENNETT: Please,
15 please, please help us. Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
18 Thank you. Sylvia Sanchez?

19 (Audience participation.)

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
21 Please go ahead. Thank you.

22 MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: Good
23 evening, everybody. I'm Sylvia Sanchez, a member
24 of CASA and I'm a rent-stabilized tenant. I was a
25 victim on two occasions of eviction note --

1
2 eviction orders. But thank God it did not go
3 through, wasn't executed because of some really
4 helpful non-profit organizations that helped me
5 out.

6 It's very difficult for the
7 working class and people that are -- earn low
8 income because we don't earn enough to pay another
9 rent increase for the third consecutive year. This
10 is unfair. Many times we have a reduction in hours
11 at work. Oh, even if we've been blessed to have a
12 job. And we also have a lack of accessible
13 housing. Add to that, the cost of the increase in
14 inflation. We feel uncertainties and insecurity
15 and it causes us to have uncertain emotional
16 stability as you have witnessed with everybody that
17 has been here present.

18 We're also socially affected
19 as well. And we have certain feelings about that,
20 such as we feel scared, fear, panic, anger, horror,
21 terrorized, desperation, just commotion, sadness,
22 and instability. And these cause high amounts of
23 like depression, anxiety, among other illnesses
24 that affect our health and our life. And it's a --
25 this constant worry that is affecting pretty much

1

2 general population. Even though you guys are not
3 in our favor.

4 We're all here demanding a
5 rollback or not an increase. And we're asking you
6 for -- to take us into consideration and to have
7 some empathy towards us the tenants because you're
8 discriminated against -- discriminating against us.
9 And it's mostly the black population, the Latino
10 population, the Mexican population, and people that
11 earn low income.

12 This is an abuse that's been,
13 that it will -- that has been occurring and this is
14 the third time during these last three years. You
15 want to raise our rent but there's nothing to do
16 with regarding repairs and fixing things in our
17 buildings. And this is so that you can increase
18 and give more money to the people that are already
19 rich. And the people that don't have the money,
20 like the lady said before, basically you -- you
21 know, it's only the -- the rich will not get to
22 heaven.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24 MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: No, no.

25 I'm not done.

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: Oh. The

4

Camel will go through the needle, the eye of the

5

needle, and it's Mark 25. And you can't have like

6

two masters. It's like God or money and you have

7

to pick one. Yeah. So there's about a million

8

homes. They're facing a possible rent increase.

9

And like it's already been stated, it will affect

10

us negatively.

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12

Thank you.

13

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: So half

14

of our income goes towards the rent and it's --

15

that's just how it is every year. So we would have

16

to do this obligatory because it's no longer a

17

need. And we would have to decide between paying

18

for our rent, buying food, pay for necessary

19

medication --

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: -- for

22

our wellbeing.

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24

We need to -- thank you.

25

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: One out

1

2 of three people has to pay more than half their
3 income in order to pay the rent. So this increase
4 to the two to four percent, the one year leases --

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please,
6 wrap up your testimony. Thank you.

7 MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: -- the
8 four to six percent. So your leases is too much.
9 Based on, like, just real situation. The current
10 rent for an apartment in rent-stabilized, that's
11 rent just for one bedroom is \$1,400 a month.
12 Compare that to like 1,845 --

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

14 MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: -- for
15 like (unintelligible).

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
17 ma'am. That's --

18 MS. SANCHEZ: If the Board
19 approves the increase of four percent for one year
20 --

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am,
22 there are many speakers this evening. Thank you.

23 MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: It's
24 going to go up to six --

25 THE INTERPRETER: 1,600?

1

2

MS. SANCHEZ: Oh 1,465. \$66

3

additionally every month. Think about this.

4

That's \$662 additional --

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

6

ma'am. Please.

7

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: That's a

8

really high amount for people that -- for a family

9

that's low income. The landlords, they're no

10

longer satisfied --

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: -- with

13

these, dilapidated buildings --

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am, we

15

have many speakers this evening. Thank you.

16

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: -- that

17

they want their rent increased and we have many

18

problems occurring. And we don't know how to fix

19

them. Plus, we also get some type of help from,

20

like, these Nonprofit Organizations. We go to them

21

and they help us -- for help.

22

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please,

23

thank you.

24

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: Hold on.

25

There's a report in New York, they had to pay for a

1

2 -- first for a high amount of money for rent and
3 competitive rents and utility costs, 143 million.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: There are
5 many other speakers this evening, ma'am. Thank
6 you. please, try to wrap up your testimony. Thank
7 you.

8

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: So ERAP
9 is the program for rental health. 298 million?
10 And there's a report from 2024 in New York.

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am, I'm
12 going to have to ask you to please, wrap up your
13 testimony. Thank you. There are many speakers
14 this evening.

15

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: One
16 second.

17

THE INTERPRETER: Somebody in
18 Shalom who's incarcerated?

19

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: Yes, for
20 harassing tenants, falsifying registrations --

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
22 ma'am.

23

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: --
24 constructions, and endangering the welfare of a
25 child and harassing tenant, having them living

1

2 there under deplorable conditions. And
3 unimaginable ones.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am,
5 please, I really need you to please, wrap up your
6 testimony. We have many other speakers this
7 evening and you're taking time from everyone else.
8 Thank you.

9

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: I'm
10 telling you the truth -- I'm telling you the truth.
11 I'm not making any of this up. This landlord
12 violated a hundred and plus orders to fix -- to
13 make repairs in the buildings. The landlords, they
14 have other buildings --

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay,
16 thank you.

17

MS. SYLVIA SANCHEZ: -- they
18 have tons of other buildings. Thank you very much.

19

(Audience participation.)

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Let me
21 just remind everyone, I would just ask you please
22 -- Orin (phonetic), Orin, Orin, Orin. I would just
23 ask you and remind you to be respectful of the
24 other speakers so that we can hear from everyone.
25 Thank you.

1

2

Our next three speakers are

3

Linda Stewart (phonetic), Tshira Rohas (phonetic),

4

and Marquetta Williams (phonetic).

5

Ms. Stewart?

6

MS. STEWART: Yes. Good

7

evening.

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9

MS. STEWART: My name is Linda

10

Stewart and I live on a Grand Concourse, and I am a

11

CASA Member. I am 72 and a half years old and a

12

resident of the Bronx. We as a city, cannot afford

13

a rent increase. Have you walked or rode through

14

the streets of some of the boroughs where you're

15

trying to increase the rent? Because if you did,

16

you would see a lot of people laying around because

17

they're homeless. The city has made many people

18

homeless.

19

I have lived on the Grand

20

Concourse for 40 years and my landlord does not

21

take care of his properties that he owns. Okay?

22

And he has property in five states. Five states.

23

We have rodents running rampant, mold growing like

24

a garden, leaks like a shower, and the buildings

25

stinking like a garbage truck. Filthy, dirty

1

2 hallways and staircases. And you want to give them
3 an increase? I don't think so. They don't even
4 employ enough people to keep the buildings clean.
5 Okay?

6 My building has two elevators,
7 one goes up to the penthouse, 168 apartments. It's
8 a large building. One elevator has been out since
9 May 17th. Okay. May 17th. And you know what
10 today's date is, okay? It's 12 floors. The second
11 elevator, since that one's out, has been out twice.
12 Lady coming home from the hospital on a stretcher.
13 And the EMTs can't figure out how to get her up to
14 the 10th floor. That's sad.

15 And the landlord knows because
16 people have been calling 311, but they don't care,
17 okay? The building has 456 violations. 456. And
18 that's a lot of violations.

19 I had mold grown in one of my
20 rooms. 311 came out, HPD came out, sent them a
21 letter, sent me a letter stating that they had to
22 come in and fix it. They never contacted me until
23 HPD called to find out if it had been done, then
24 they had to get a person who was a professional to
25 come in and clean it. Not the regular painters

1

2 because all they do is paint over.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

4

ma'am.

5

MS. STEWART: Okay.

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

7

ma'am.

8

MS. STEWART: The landlords

9

are not hurting as they claim, they're not hurting

10

at all. They're cutting back so much, even on

11

their repairs. They're cutting the workers. Where

12

my building used to have five workers, we're down

13

to two. Okay? And I'm not talking about the small

14

building owners, I'm talking about the large

15

building owners and you know that they are hedge

16

fund ones.

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

18

ma'am.

19

MS. STEWART: You have --

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21

MS. STEWART: Okay. So we --

22

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

23

ma'am.

24

MS. STEWART: -- as a group

25

are asking you, please, do not raise the rent. We

1

2 were given a rent freeze in 2015 and '16. A rent
3 freeze. I know that. If we could do that, if they
4 could do that; a rent freeze --

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
6 ma'am.

7 MS. STEWART: -- that you
8 could roll it back. So we'll take either one, a
9 rent freeze or a rent rollback. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
11 Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. ROHAS: Hi, my name is
14 Tshira Rohas, and I live in the Bronx. And the
15 reason why I'm against the -- the raising of the
16 rent is because basically COVID had affected people
17 and people just lost their jobs. And the reason is
18 that if people lose their jobs, people cannot
19 afford to pay the rent. And if people cannot
20 afford to pay the rent, that means they have
21 problems buying food.

22 So now people who are
23 struggling to get a rent increase, now they're
24 homeless. And you know, the homeless population
25 came from mental illness and not being able to pay

1

2 the rent, too. And, and now you have to choose
3 between buying food, buying food for your families,
4 buying food for yourself. And now it's like
5 telling people just to take a dollar and to stretch
6 that from \$1, just to \$20.

7 And I've been in the Bronx and
8 I like it and it's not perfect, but at least I can
9 say one thing. I can afford to live here. And now
10 with like this rent increase, it doesn't help
11 anyone at all. It hurts the tenants, it hurts the
12 landlords, it hurts everybody. Nobody wins in the
13 rent increase because then now you have to pinch
14 pennies.

15 Oh, how much money do I need
16 just to get job number two? How much money do I
17 need just to get job number three? How much money
18 do I need just to live here in the Bronx? If you
19 have to work three jobs, you to pay your rent and
20 you're single, that's horrible.

21 Now imagine if you had four
22 kids and your wife can't work and you have to pay
23 \$1,500 in rent. And you have to pay ConEd, and you
24 have to buy food, and you have to pay for cable,
25 and you have to buy clothes. And by the way, you

1

2 don't even qualify for assistance for HRA because
3 you have to make \$800 a month.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

5

MS. ROHAS: And that's

6

poverty. And that's what I have to say.

7

(Applause.)

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

9

ma'am.

10

Marquetta Williams? Thank

11

you.

12

MS. WILLIAMS: Hello, how you

13

doing? Good evening, board. Thank you for coming

14

out tonight. I'm out here representing the

15

disabled. I'm representing the elderly. I am not

16

myself disabled, I am not myself elderly; I'm

17

young, I am a nurse, I graduated from this very

18

school.

19

I'm out here representing CASA

20

and everybody else that got problems in their

21

house. We're not going to talk about the problems

22

because you already know them. The problem is

23

actually that we got working class people out here,

24

we got veterans people out here, we got people who

25

go to work every day who can't afford the rent.

1

2 Why? Because it wants to be increased. Landlords
3 got to get with, you know, the services they need
4 to, they under up a lot of pressure, they got to
5 get energy efficient buildings, we understand that.
6 But the people of New York, we can't even afford a
7 box of cereal because it's \$10 for a box of cereal.

8 Like the people said, these
9 people out here got to buy diabetes medication.
10 They can't afford a rent increase. These people
11 don't got -- we -- excuse me, wheelchair
12 accessibility. And they buildings, they sitting
13 out here at 75 years old with three jobs just to
14 pay the rent.

15 Ladies and gentlemen, we are
16 just asking you for a little compassion because
17 veterans shouldn't be working this hard. 70-year
18 olds, these are a few 70 year olds that came out on
19 this stage today telling you that they're working
20 three jobs, single people. There's families out
21 here telling you that her daughter got depressed
22 and want to cut herself and die because her mother
23 is -- can't afford to pay the rent. You got to pay
24 rent, you got to pay food, you got to pick one.
25 The MTA going up, everything is going up and now

1

2 the rent is going up, too.

3

4 The landlords get breaks, the
5 tenants don't get breaks. The landlords get taxed,
6 you know, breaks. And they get, "okay, here's \$200
7 to fix." But they're not fixing. These people
8 live in their squalor. Their elevators don't work.
9 The lady live on the hundredth floor can't get home
10 from the hospital. People can't get up with their
11 groceries.

11

12 Please, consider, when you're
13 going home tonight, it's very late that these
14 people came. They sitting out here, they work.
15 Please, consider a lower increase, or a no
16 increase, or a rent freeze. Let's do something
17 that work for the tenants --

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18

19 MS. WILLIAMS: -- and the
20 landlords, thank you for your time.

20

(Applause.)

21

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
23 thank you, thank you. Our next three speakers will
24 be Francisco Rios (phonetic), Kenneth Simons -
25 Simmons (phonetic) excuse me. And Helen Guzman.
Thank you.

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Francisco?

4

Great. Thank you.

5

MR. RIOS: Okay, thank you.

6

Yeah. Okay. Hello, guys. Ladies and gentlemen,

7

hello. Listen, I'm going to make you short and

8

sweet, okay? Most of these people here, they all

9

letting you all know exactly what's going on in the

10

city of New York, okay? And that's the landlords.

11

The landlords, they don't care really about us

12

tenants. They don't - you know, you - everybody is

13

here complaining. Everybody here's telling you all

14

what's going on. I know you've taken your time

15

here to listen to everybody, right? That's good.

16

That's great you came out here. But like the young

17

lady said just before me, when you all go home, you

18

all listen and, and remember the most important

19

things that was said here today. And one of the

20

things is the landlords and the buildings, the way

21

they are being treated, there's no supers in the

22

buildings.

23

In my buildings, there's no

24

super; we don't have a super to take care of our

25

building. I live in 101 Woodycrest Avenue. Yeah.

1
2 And the -- you could see it in the news every day.
3 People complaining, tenants complaining, rats,
4 molding, all kinds of stuff inside the apartments.
5 Buildings being torn down. Falling down like the
6 one on Tremont Avenue. You know, how far -- how
7 long -- what is it going to take? More buildings
8 to crumble? Because they're not taking care of the
9 buildings. They're not taking care. They're not
10 taking care of the apartments, they're not taking
11 care of the hallways, they're not taking care of
12 any kind of the buildings here.

13 So what is it going to take
14 for you guys to listen and understand? We don't
15 want -- okay, rent increase. That's rent increase.
16 How? How are we going to pay this rent increase
17 making at a \$16? What's the minimum wage? \$16.
18 \$16 an hour, 40 hours a week. That's \$640 a week.
19 And if you take taxes, that's \$550 a week. And if
20 you add that by four weeks, that's \$2,200 a month.
21 Like the lady was saying, over here, you pay 1,400,
22 \$1,500 a month.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24 MR. RIOS: So how you going to
25 pay your rent?

1

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3 MR. RIOS: It's impossible.

4 Then the cable and the Con Edison. There's no way.

5 We can't afford another rent increase. We can't

6 afford it.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8 MR. RIOS: Okay?

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

10 MR. RIOS: And the landlords

11 please. The landlords.

12 (Audience participation.)

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

14 Kenneth Simmons?

15 (Audience participation).

16 MR. SIMMONS: Good evening,

17 ladies and gentlemen. In the name of the Almighty,

18 the merciful benefactor, the merciful redeemer,

19 this is the Almighty's house. And we are all here

20 in this world in his house together at the same

21 time for a reason. We are thankful to you and us

22 who are here tonight, that we have arrived here

23 safely and we pray to the Almighty for a safe

24 return for all of us. This is a quality of life

25 issue.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

The honorable Walter Fauntroy, former Congressperson and companion of Dr. Martin Luther King, journalist, informed us that income, education, healthcare, housing and justice, the absence of any one of those things, spell trouble for families and neighborhoods and by extension our country; and justice is putting everything in its proper place.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

On 25th Street in Manhattan there are two -- there's a court of appeals court there and there are two statues. One of the statues at the foot of it, it says "Wisdom. Every law not based on wisdom, is a menace; a menace to the state." On 60th street-- I mean on 60 Center Street at the -- the State Supreme Court, it says "The true administration of justice is the firmest pillar of good government."

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

We are asking you to use your power to prevent any increase. In fact, we would encourage a rent rollback. All of us are here today advocating for that because we do understand it's a quality of life concern. We are hurting right now. And I'm sure you know this. And if you don't know this, we're here to tell you. And

1

2 please, don't take it to heart. Some of us have
3 expressed ourselves in certain kinds of ways and we
4 pray that you don't take that to heart. Hear us,
5 please.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7 MR. SIMMONS: Do justly, love
8 mercy. Walk humbly with the Almighty and love your
9 neighbor as you love yourself. Thank you very much
10 for listening.

11 (Applause.)

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13 Thank you very much.

14 Helen?

15 MS. GUZMAN: Hello, my name is
16 Helen Guzman and I'm here today with CASA. I live
17 at 2020 Grand Concourse and I've been living there
18 for 2.5 years. I can tell you I'm a
19 student-teacher right now and I pay over 50 percent
20 of my income in rent. And I don't understand why,
21 because there are maintenance issues. We have
22 pests, mice, roaches the pipes aren't working today
23 we didn't have water without notification, my
24 neighbor has mold and just roaches in the
25 incinerator.

1
2 And so I just don't understand
3 why landlords are getting 14 -- \$14,000 -- or
4 sorry, \$1,417 a month from me and from all my
5 neighbors collecting all of this. They're not
6 really looking out for -- like, it's not a mutual
7 relationship here. The building -- my building has
8 --the landlords have filed the most eviction cases
9 for in their portfolio in my building, 2020. And
10 it's mostly -- it used to be 69 of those apartments
11 used to be rent-stabilized. Now it's 60.

12 So my understanding is that if
13 they're having us live in these in these
14 conditions, they're not really trying to keep their
15 tenants. They're not really trying to work with
16 their tenants. And this is not a mutually
17 beneficial relationship. It's actually
18 exploitative. So yeah, they don't deserve a raise.
19 They don't deserve what we're paying them right
20 now, that -- you know, the money that I'm actually
21 struggling to pay them right now. I have to put
22 them before everything else that I need, before
23 helping my family. And that's unacceptable. So I
24 also support rent rollback and I will fight for
25 that with everyone else here.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

Thank you very much.

5

Our next three speakers will

6

be Elijah Jarret (phonetic), Ernest Walters

7

(phonetic), and Vanessa Bayers (phonetic).

8

(Audience participation.)

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Elijah?

10

Is Mr. Walters still here? Please, go ahead.

11

Thank you.

12

MR. WALTERS: Yes. Hello.

13

How you doing? I just want to know if the -- well,

14

first of all, grace in peace in the name of the

15

Lord Jesus Christ, right? I want to know if you

16

raise the rent and the people can't pay the rent,

17

what happens to the people? That's number one.

18

Number two, if molds is in the

19

apartment, the molds come from leaking water, water

20

that's dripping all over the place and stuff like

21

that is caught infestation. What about if kids

22

come to visit or people? The mold can hurt them in

23

their lungs or in their bodies or whatever. So

24

what happens if the ceiling from the bathroom falls

25

down and the person gets hurt or whatever? Who's

1

2 responsible for all of these negative things that
3 can happen to a person? That's all I'm asking.
4 All this rent rollback and all this stuff like
5 that.

6 What happens to a person who,
7 because of the landlord's insufficiency or
8 negligence, loses their life in their apartment
9 because of something that happened because of them?
10 All of the repairs, see, you all want a rent
11 increase and that might be fine. But then what
12 about the things that never get done and they get
13 increased, but the things that need to get fixed or
14 get done, never get fixed, never get done. So
15 that's all I'm saying. That who is going to be
16 responsible or who's going to own up to the fact
17 that people might die in situations? Who's going
18 to be responsible for that? Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
21 Ms. Bayers? Vanessa Bayers.

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next
24 three speakers then will be Sukoro Rodriguez
25 (phonetic), Martina Rivera (phonetic), and Lucy

1

2 Arroyo (phonetic).

3

Sukoro Rodriguez, Martina

4

Rivera, and Lucy Arroyo.

5

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening,

6

all. My name is Sukoro Rodriguez.

7

The INTERPRETER: Her name is

8

Sukoro Rodriguez. She's a bit emotional, so she

9

would prefer that I read her testimony.

10

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I live at 311

11

East, 193rd Street in the Bronx. And I'm a member

12

of CASA. I've been living in my apartment for more

13

than 18 years now. I pay the rent and I'm

14

responsible for myself, for my daughter, and my

15

granddaughter who is nine years old.

16

I rented out a room in my

17

apartment, now about a month and a half ago. That

18

person became very belligerent and practically

19

destroyed the door to my bedroom, many of my

20

personal effects, he destroyed the kitchen, he

21

literally cut all of the wires to the refrigerator

22

and other appliances. For this reason, I became

23

very nervous thinking that he would attack me

24

physically and I left my apartment.

25

At the moment I am in another

1
2 apartment where I am renting out a room for \$250.
3 I had to file a case in court so that he would be
4 removed from the premises and then I could go back
5 to my apartment. And of course now the landlord
6 has initiated -- has started a case against me for
7 not paying the rent because I was unable to pay the
8 rent while I was out of my apartment. At the
9 moment, I'm waiting because I applied for a one
10 shot deal and I would like to see if I will be
11 eligible for them to pay all of the back rent.

12 I don't believe that I deserve
13 to live this way. I believe that the city should
14 help people like this and to find another apartment
15 for them. However, I need to be in my apartment as
16 soon as possible. Because of that we deserve that
17 and we also deserve a rent rollback. Thank you so
18 very much.

19 (Applause.)

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
21 very much.

22 Martina Rivera?

23 THE INTERPRETER: Martina
24 Rivera?

25 (No response.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.

3

Lucy Arroyo?

4

THE INTERPRETER: She left.

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: She left?

6

Okay. All right. Thank you everyone for joining

7

us. Very much appreciate hearing your testimony.

8

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

9

MR. GUPTA: Motion.

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Second?

11

MS. DEROSE: Second.

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

Thank you.

14

(Audience participation.)

15

(At 8:00 P.M., the proceedings

16

were concluded.)

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STATE OF NEW YORK)
SS.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public within and
for the State of New York, do hereby certify that
the foregoing pages 1 through 165,. taken at the
time and place aforesaid, is a true and correct
transcription of the Video Meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my name this 9th day of September,
2024.



MARC RUSSO

Concordance

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