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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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Medgar Evers College
650 Bedford Ave 1st Floor
Founders Auditorium
Brooklyn, NY 11225
June 5, 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 Alex Schwartz

6 Doug Apple

7 Robert Ehrlich

8 Genesis Aquino

9 Adan Soltren

10 Christina Smyth

11

12 S T A F F:

13 Andrew McLaughlin - Executive Director

14 Brian Hoberman - Co-Research Director

15 Danielle Burger - Co-Research Director

16 Charmaine Superville - Office Manager

17

18

19

20

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I would

4

like to welcome you all to this public hearing of

5

the New York City Rent Guidelines Board, and thank

6

you all for being here. This is the third of four

7

public hearings to consider comments concerning

8

proposed rent adjustments for leases, for

9

apartments, lofts, hotels, and other housing units,

10

subject to the Rent Stabilization Law of 1969 in

11

the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974. These

12

adjustments will affect Leases commencing between

13

October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025.

14

I will now take roll call.

15

Please respond if present.

16

Doug Apple?

17

MR. APPLE: Present.

18

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Genesis

19

Aquino?

20

MS. AQUINO: Present.

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Christina

22

DeRose?

23

(No response.)

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Rob

25

Ehrlich?

1

2

MR. Ehrlich: Present.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Arpit

4

Gupta?

5

(No response.)

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Alex

7

Schwartz?

8

MR. SCHWARTZ: Present.

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Christina

10

Smyth?

11

MS. SMYTH: Present.

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Adán

13

Soltren?

14

MR. SOLTREN: Present.

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: And Nester

16

Davidson. I am present. Let the record show that

17

we have a quorum.

18

The next meeting of this Board

19

will be a public hearing to comment on the proposed

20

guidelines on June 11th at Adler Hall at the New

21

York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 West 64th

22

Street in Manhattan from 5:00 p.m. Until 8:00 p.m.

23

Anyone who wants to speak --

24

excuse me, comment on the proposed guidelines at a

25

public hearing must sign up to speak. People

1

2 wishing to speak at the public hearings can
3 pre-register in advance either through our website
4 nyc.gov/rgb or by calling (212) 669-7480 from 9:00
5 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

6 Pre-registration ends at noon,
7 on the business day prior to each hearing.

8 For those not able to
9 pre-register for the hearings, registration is also
10 available at public meetings from 5:00 p.m. until
11 8:00 p.m. All of our public meetings are live
12 streamed and Spanish interpretation is provided at
13 each hearing.

14 We also accept comments on the
15 proposed guidelines outside of our public hearings.
16 You can submit written, audio, and video comments
17 for the Board to review through June 11th.
18 Instructions on how to submit these comments will
19 be available on the Board's website at
20 @nyc.gov/rgb, by email at @askatrgb.nyc.gov, or by
21 calling the RGB again at (212) 669-7480.

22 Our final vote on the
23 guidelines will take place on Monday, June 17th,
24 starting at 7:00 p.m. at Assembly Hall at Hunter
25 College, East 69th Street between Park and

1

2 Lexington avenues. The public may attend in person
3 or may watch the vote live by streaming it on the
4 RGB's YouTube channel. To find out how, visit the
5 RGB website nyc.gov/rgb or call the RGB at (212)
6 669-7480 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

7 Before we begin, I would like
8 to go over the rules and procedures for those who
9 are testifying before the Board. If you wish to
10 speak, you must confirm with RGB staff at the
11 registration table located near the entrance of
12 this hall. Speakers will not be called if they
13 have not checked in at the registration table.

14 We have a Spanish interpreter
15 here this evening. When registering to speak,
16 please notify the staff if you would like an
17 interpreter. I will try to call several names in
18 advance to let you know that you will soon be
19 called on to speak.

20 If you have materials to
21 distribute to the Board, please give them to the
22 RGB's staff sitting at the sign-in table and near
23 the entrance.

24 I will attempt to alternate
25 speakers between tenants and owners, but this is

1

2 not always possible. In order to accommodate as
3 many speakers as possible, each speaker will have
4 two minutes to give their testimony. An additional
5 two minutes of speaking time will be given to those
6 speakers utilizing interpretation services.

7 To help speakers keep track of
8 their time, we have a clock. We'll start the clock
9 when you begin speaking. The clock will beep once
10 when you have 30 seconds left, will continue
11 beeping when your allotted two minutes are up. If
12 you are still speaking at the end of two minutes, I
13 will ask you to quickly wrap up your testimony.
14 And I appreciate your testimony.

15 We expect many speakers, and
16 the Board wants to hear from as many of you as
17 possible in the limited time we have for this
18 hearing. We understand that it may be difficult to
19 say everything that you want us to hear in just two
20 minutes, but please understand that it is our
21 responsibility to try to make sure that everyone
22 who has taken the time to come here and testify
23 will have a fair opportunity to be heard.

24 Oh, and if you pre-registered,
25 please still register -- please still check in at

1

2 the registration desk so that we know you are here.
3 Thank you. And thank you for your cooperation and
4 the Board is looking forward to hearing your
5 comments regarding proposed rent adjustment
6 guidelines.

7

Please?

8

9 THE INTERPRETER: (Translating
from English to Spanish.)

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
11 so much, Liz.

12

Our first three speakers will
13 be the Honorable Crystal Huston -- Hudson from the
14 New York City Council, Leon Goldenberg, and Jared
15 Watson.

16

MS. HUDSON: Good evening. I
17 just want to make a statement, but I'll be
18 submitting longer written testimony.

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

20

MS. HUDSON: So our city is
21 facing a severe housing affordability crisis. It
22 has resulted in poor and working-class New Yorkers
23 moving out in droves. Black and brown folks being
24 displaced from the very communities they've worked
25 to nurture over generations and threaten the

1

2 livelihoods of the vast majority of New Yorkers and
3 the integrity of our city.

4 Our policies should affirm
5 life instability, yet sustained increases to
6 rent-stabilized tenants run counter to this idea
7 overburdening people who are already severely and
8 disproportionately rent-burdened; older adults on
9 fixed incomes, poor and working-class families,
10 longtime tenants, and our black and brown
11 neighbors.

12 Time and again year after
13 year, new Yorkers have made their opposition clear
14 to the Rent Guidelines Board's proposed increases
15 to rent-stabilized units, yet against their
16 testimony and the backdrop of unprecedented
17 inflation, this Board has voted to increase rents
18 for two consecutive years.

19 This year, the Board is posed
20 to inflict even more damage. Average
21 inflation-adjusted wages fell 6 percent between
22 2022 and 2023. 20 percent of rent-stabilized
23 tenants are food insecure or unable to afford
24 either full or balanced meals at the least part of
25 the -- at least part of the time compared to 12

1

2 It is my hope that you will truly listen to what
3 the vast majority of New Yorkers are telling you.
4 The rent is already too high. Thank you.

5

(Applause.)

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7

Leon Goldenberg? Thank you,

8

please. Thank you.

9

MR. GOLDENBERG: Ready?

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes.

11

MR. GOLDENBERG: I am the

12

operator and third-party manager of rent-stabilized

13

buildings in New York City. Last year, you

14

acknowledged that our income went down 8 percent,

15

and yet you only gave us a 3 percent increase based

16

on the fact of what tenants can afford.

17

Let's be perfectly honest, you

18

do not know what tenants can afford as you do not

19

do a means test. If you would be willing to do a

20

means test on our tenants, we would be willing to

21

give a 2 percent increase, which the New York City

22

requires of low-income co-ops as a minimum for

23

tenants who can't afford it, but you can give us

24

the 8 percent increase --

25

(Audience participation.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please

3

continue.

4

MR. GOLDENBERG: -- on tenants

5

who can't afford it. Without a means test for you

6

to argue that tenants can afford to rent this

7

bogus. There's a means test in NYCHA housing so

8

why not for rent-stabilized apartments? You are

9

forcing rent-stabilized owners to walk from their

10

buildings; you can look at the numbers, I'm sure

11

this will thrill the tenant advocates.

12

If the sea takes over our

13

buildings, advocates will be thrilled, but they

14

will get the same services as they do in NYCHA.

15

NYCHA takes over a year to get an apartment fixed

16

and spends \$375,000 to get an apartment ready.

17

NYCHA collects over 2000 per apartment per month in

18

rent and loses money all while they're not paying

19

real estate tax water and sewer charges and no real

20

insurance.

21

I am old enough to remember

22

90s when RGB gave an increase of 4 percent for a

23

one-year lease and 7 percent for a two-year lease,

24

which started on day one of the new lease and not

25

as you did last year on the anniversary of lease

1

2 one. In effect, you load the rent increase to 2.75
3 percent. What the RGB did in the nineties was when
4 a landlord had very low rent tenant, there was an
5 additional increase of 2040 or \$60 -

6 (Audience participation.)

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please
8 continue. We can hear you

9 MR. GOLDENBERG: -- over the
10 initial rent increase. I think that tenants who
11 are paying very low rents -- can you hear this?

12 (Audience participation.)

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I can -- I
14 can hear you. Thank you.

15 MR. GOLDENBERG: -- save five
16 to \$900 and I have 139 that are paying less than
17 900. Many of them can afford that increase. I
18 don't know for sure, but neither do you.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
20 so much.

21 Jared Watson?

22 And after Mr. Watson, just so
23 folks know, our next three speakers will be Lacey
24 Tauber, Esteban Giron, and Kayla Thomas.

25 Please go ahead. Thank you.

1

2

3

4

5

MR. WATSON: Good evening. My name is Jared Watson. I am a tenant organizer at Fifth Avenue Committee, and I am a rent-stabilized tenant right here in Brooklyn.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

In my neighborhood, at Sunset Park, Folks can't afford a big fat rent increase. We heard from the council member a whole bunch of data; all of which is true. I'll just say for my part, you know, I pay over a third of my income for a pretty modest old rent-stabilized apartment on Fourth Avenue. I can't afford to pay all that much more. And our regular working-class folks, many of which we have a lot of our members here tonight, I want you to look at them.

16

(Applause.)

17

18

MR. WATSON: So we ask for a 0 percent increase and fight, fight, fight.

19

(Audience participation.)

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Lacey

22

Tauber.

23

MS. TAUBER: Hi, my name is

24

Lacey Tauber and I'm here to testify on behalf of

25

Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, and in

1

2 turn, on behalf of Brooklyn tenants. In this
3 borough, it is increasingly difficult to find an
4 affordable apartment. If you're one of the lucky
5 ones who live in a rent-regulated unit already,
6 it's hard to continue to afford it.

7 New York City's vacancy rate
8 is the lowest it's been since 1968, and fewer
9 apartments are available across all rent levels,
10 meaning it's especially difficult right now for low
11 and moderate-income New Yorkers to find in secure
12 housing.

13 Meanwhile, rents have
14 increased more than 9 percent in the last two years
15 and are continuing -- continuing to go up. And the
16 families who are leaving the city at the fastest
17 rate are people of color who make between 32 to
18 \$65000 a year according to the New York Times.
19 These people would qualify for affordable housing
20 at about 30 to 50 percent of the area median income
21 but we're not building nearly enough new affordable
22 housing at those levels to meet the need.

23 Meanwhile, the area median
24 income for New York City has increased 30 percent
25 since 2021, yet I think we would be hard-pressed to

1

2 find anyone in this room whose wages have increased
3 30 percent in that same amount of time.

4 The result is that almost 30
5 percent of Brooklynites are experiencing severe
6 rent burdened meaning their -- they pay over 50
7 percent of their household income on rent. I said
8 this last year, and I'll reiterate, we're talking
9 hundreds of thousands of people, including
10 rent-regulated tenants just in this borough,
11 choosing between paying rent and affording
12 essentials.

13 For all those reasons, keeping
14 rent-regulated units affordable is one of the most
15 important tools we have to keep the city vibrant
16 and diverse, yet the Board is considering a
17 proposal that would put the total rent increase
18 since 2020 at over 12 percent for one-year leases
19 and almost 20 percent for two-year leases. Again,
20 we would be hard-pressed to find anyone whose wages
21 have kept up with that kind of increase.

22 Borough President Reynoso is
23 calling on the Board to project -- sorry, to reject
24 the proposed rate increases and help ensure that
25 Brooklynites can stay in the borough we love, raise

1

2 their families here, and grow old here on a fixed
3 income. His motto is that this should be a
4 Brooklyn for all, and with your help, it can stay
5 that way. Thank you.

6

(Applause.)

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

MR. GIRON: Hello, my name is

9 Esteban Giron. I serve on the Board of Tenants
10 Park and I'm a proud member of the Crown Heights
11 Tenant Union.

12

(Applause.)

13

MR. GIRON: I'm a

14 rent-stabilized tenant and I live literally a block
15 away. I want to extend a warm welcome to the
16 honorable tenant members of the Board, Adán and
17 Genesis; nice to see you. Welcome to Crown
18 Heights.

19

For the rest of you, I extend

20 nothing but contempt and disgust at seeing you
21 sitting on a stage in our neighborhood, and not
22 even all of you here, you're missing two people.
23 Ridiculous. Since your boss has already told you
24 how you're going to -- how much he's going to raise
25 the rent and has the lowest approval rating of any

1

2 mayor in recent memory, you may want to warn him
3 that no amount of real estate money is going to
4 save him from being a one-term mayor if we get
5 anything but a rent freeze or a rent rollback.

6 It's clear that like our
7 mayor, you hate poor people and you hate people of
8 color. Now, as you cowards attempt to sneak out of
9 here so you don't have to face your victims, I want
10 you to look up and see Ebbets Field to your left,
11 Tivoli Towers directly in front of you, and all of
12 the rent-stabilized buildings along Franklin
13 Avenue, mine included.

14 I want you to understand that
15 there are real people living in these apartments;
16 elders and families who have called Crown Heights
17 home for generations that you will be effectively
18 expelling from this city. I pray that -- well, the
19 five of you, really, seven of you, Nestor, Erick
20 (phonetic), Alex, Doug, Robert, and both
21 Christinas, never again know moment of peace in
22 this city that every single New Yorker -

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MR. GIRON: -- that every
25 single New Yorker affected by your cruel decision

1

2 stops you at the train on the street at a
3 restaurant to call you out for the karma you've
4 caused. Know that your children and grandchildren
5 will look back and shame at your hateful racist
6 legacy.

7 And to my fellow tenants in
8 the audience, never forget that your rent went up
9 because Eric Adams doesn't give a shit about you.
10 Real estate has paid and now we're going to get
11 played.

12 And I end with a simple
13 heartfelt chant. Please loudly repeat after me.
14 Fuck you, Nester.

15 (Audience participation.)

16 MR. GIRON: One more time.

17 Fuck you, Nester.

18 (Audience participation.)

19 MR. GIRON: Thank you. And
20 goodnight.

21 (Applause.)

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Kayla
23 Thomas?

24 MS. THOMAS: Good evening.

25 I'm Kayla Thomas, a 27-year-old born and raised New

1

2 Yorker, currently living in Crown Heights, sharing
3 a five-bedroom, two-bath apartment with four other
4 rent-paying adults. We're all just barely making
5 ends meet.

6 After receiving my rent
7 history in the mail, I learned that in 2015, the
8 rent of my apartment unit was \$840 a month. This
9 was back when it was a rent-stabilized two-bedroom
10 unit with a real living room and a real kitchen.
11 When I moved in during the summer of 2022, the
12 units rent sat at \$4,000 a month. That is a 376
13 percent increase.

14 The significant rise, which
15 continues to jump year by year, does not come with
16 any additional benefits to me. In actuality, the
17 living conditions have starkly declined over time.
18 We have struggled with vermin leaks, which have
19 destroyed my downstairs neighbor's ceiling, a
20 broken doorknob that locked me inside my apartment
21 for five hours with a fire escape that does not
22 work, and more. Every technician comments that
23 building renovations were done poorly and cheaply.

24 My landlord and management
25 company have cut costs while pocketing money and

1

2 failing to maintain their 1200 units across 85
3 buildings and four boroughs. A total of 14,841
4 complaints have been filed against them to 311.
5 Furthermore, New York City open data shows that 89
6 percent of units in New York City are owned by
7 corporations like this one. Those of us with
8 cents, no better than to buy into false narratives
9 that the landlord lobby continues to propagate.

10

For the vast majority of
11 cases, housing in this city is not about small
12 immigrant landlords struggling to survive; it is
13 about developers and large management companies
14 lining their pockets while forcing primarily
15 working-class black and brown New Yorkers to live
16 in undignified conditions, forcing them out. By
17 allowing --

18

(Applause.)

19

MS. THOMAS: -- by allowing
20 the rent to rise, you bring shame to your
21 communities and to yourselves. This is what you
22 will be remembered for.

23

(Applause.)

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
25 Our next -- our next three speakers will be Anna

1

2 Reyes, Patricia Martinez, and Samantha Bravo.

3

MS. MARTINEZ: My name is

4

Patricia Martinez and I live in Sunset Park,

5

Brooklyn, New York. I'm a member of the

6

(unintelligible).

7

(Applause.)

8

MS. MARTINEZ: I'm a single

9

mother and unfortunately the majority of my income

10

goes to paying rent. I would like to comment that

11

the situation of a lot of tenants is that either

12

they do not have work or they do not have enough

13

money to eat because they have to pay rent.

14

I'm here to talk to you about

15

how -- I'm here to talk to you about how this will

16

affect me; specifically an increase in rent. The

17

rent increase affects me psychologically because

18

I'm not able to live with my son and my family, and

19

this affects me deeply.

20

So my mother is also sick, and

21

sometimes I have to think to myself, you know, it's

22

understandable that rent is -- excuse me, that

23

health is so much more important, but what's going

24

to happen if I get sick? How is the rent going to

25

get paid? I am the only one that works and

1

2 contributes money to the household. Those are all
3 the reasons why I'm here to tell you I do not agree
4 with the rent increase. Instead of increasing the
5 rent, I'm asking for 0 percent.

6 (Applause.)

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8 (Audience participation.)

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Do we have
10 -- thank you. Thank you. Do we -- do we have Anna
11 Reyes? Anna? Anna Reyes? Anna Reyes. Anna
12 Reyes.

13 (No response.)

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.
15 Samantha Bravo? Please.

16 MS. BRAVO: Good evening. My
17 name is Samantha Bravo and I am a member of
18 Brooklyn Tenants United. I have a question for all
19 of those on the panel. Have you ever had to apply
20 for rental assistance because you cannot afford
21 your rent? Have you ever received an eviction
22 notice? If you have not, then you can ask many of
23 the tenants here what it's like. The frustration
24 of not being able to pay your rent, the anguish and
25 fear of losing your apartment, the hopelessness

1

2

MS. BRAVO: What do we want?

3

(Audience participation.)

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

5

Our next three speakers will be Christopher

6

Athineos, Maya Shots, and Michael Hollingsworth.

7

THE INTERPRETER: She was

8

before you actually. Ms. Reyes.

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Anna?

10

Okay. Sorry.

11

INTERPRETER: Yes. Ms. Anna

12

Reyes.

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

14

very much. Okay.

15

MS. REYES: Good afternoon.

16

My name is Anna Reyes. I'm a member of the

17

Brooklyn Tenants United Group, and I am recently

18

living in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, New York. Today, I

19

am here for the same reasons that I had in previous

20

years and that I will most likely do in the

21

following years. Every year we express to you, the

22

members of the Guidelines Board, the countless

23

injustices and harassment by landlords towards us,

24

the tenants, to evict us from homes, using all

25

types of methods to achieve this despite paying

1

2 them rent month after month.

3

4 The amount we pay for the
5 apartments is still not enough. The owners claim
6 that the increase is to fix the apartments, and
7 that is a lie. They never respond to solve the
8 problems in the apartments, they do not fix
9 anything if there are damages or services that are
10 not working inside the apartments.

11

12 I, like many of the people
13 here today, have two jobs to be able to pay the
14 rent, which is increasingly difficult to pay. I
15 spend more time at work than at the apartment where
16 I live. I sleep a few hours, which affects me
17 physically, mentally, and emotionally, which makes
18 it more difficult to concentrate on my studies,
19 which also isolates us every day because we do not
20 have time for our families and friends or to sit
21 with them and eat at a table.

22

23 These are luxuries that we
24 cannot have, thanks to the rent increases that you
25 have approved and the tenants have paid month after
26 month. We have made many sacrifices to be able to
27 continue having a home. I ask you, what sacrifices
28 have you made to be able to approve the rent

1

2 increases? Thank you.

3

(Applause.)

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

5

MR. ATHINEOS: My building

6

this year required yet again another band-aid on

7

the façade, which cost over \$50,000. Rather than

8

replace the bricks as the public school did two

9

blocks away from me or the co-op building did six

10

blocks away, I had to just fix the cracks and patch

11

them with mortar. It's not the most thorough job,

12

but it is the cheapest, and sadly, the cheapest is

13

the only thing that we can afford with all of the

14

other increased operating expenses such as

15

insurance, water, and sewer, and taxes.

16

We also spent about \$30,000

17

three years ago on the same job. Unfortunately,

18

with a building that's about a hundred years old,

19

we can't afford to spend \$2 million like the public

20

school or the co-op to replace the entire façade.

21

We can't finance it either with the sky-high

22

insurance rates. We can't wait 20 years either to

23

squirrel away some of the money and pay for a new

24

façade. The damage to the interiors of the

25

departments require immediate action. So patchwork

1

2 is what we do.

3

(Audience participation.)

4

5 MR. ATHINEOS: Since COVID, we
6 have one tenant who has received a year's -- has
7 received a year's rent paid through ERAP. She
8 continued to stop painting after that. She hasn't
9 qualified for rent relief from the government so
10 far, and the legal fees keep mounting. She owes
11 \$25,000 that could be put towards building
12 improvements.

12

13 The BI-OP has not been updated
14 in quite some time, taking into account gas
15 inspections and repairs, energy mandates, and new
16 lead paint inspections required to be completed by
17 2025. It costs an average of \$500 per apartment to
18 XRF an apartment. For some apartment, that's about
19 half or a third of the monthly rent. That's just
20 the testing. It doesn't cover any abatement, which
21 can run into the tens of thousands.

21

22 So as apartments come up with
23 the new lead paint requirements, they'll sit empty
24 waiting to be in compliance while we have to decide
25 between repairing the façade, abating the lead
26 paint, and putting an apartment back on the market,

1

2 or paying the insurance bills. Every month there
3 are decisions to be made.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6

7 MR. ATHINEOS: The Board does
8 not take into consideration the age of the
9 buildings, the frequency of repairs, new mandates,
10 or most importantly, being able to preserve and
11 maintain these buildings for our renters.

12

12 While the Board weighs income
13 affordability --

13

(Audience participation.)

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

15

16 MR. ATHINEOS: -- I hope you
17 consider what detrimental effects you will do to
18 the conditions of the housing with inadequate
19 increases --

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

20

21 MR. ATHINEOS: -- which
22 unfortunately have been the norm over the years due
23 to the politicizing.

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24

25 MR. ATHINEOS: -- of this
critical infrastructure.

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

4

MR. ATHINEOS: Please pass an increase, commensurate with what it takes to operate, maintain, and improve the buildings that are over 100 years old. Thank you.

7

(Audience participation.)

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9

Our next speaker will be Maya Shots. Thank you. Please. Thank you.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

MS. SHOTS: No, they can have the time. It's okay.

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

15

Thank you. Please go ahead. Thank you.

16

MS. SHOTS: Okay. My name is May Shots and I'm a member of the Crown Heights Tenant Union. I live right up the road on Pacific Street. I've lived in Crown Heights for over six years, and in my current rent-stabilized apartment for over three and a half years.

22

23

24

25

My neighbors and I live in a crumbling building where bathroom ceilings are constantly caving in. Our wood floors have holes and soft spots. Tenants deal with mice, roaches,

1

2 and other pests every day, and the elevator for our
3 sixth-floor building has been out for almost two
4 months now.

5

Elderly tenants and tenants
6 with disabilities are trapped in the building and
7 unable to attend doctor's appointments or even
8 accomplish necessary tasks like grocery shopping
9 and laundry because they can't use the stairs.
10 Since the elevator has began, multiple people have
11 fallen down the stairs and injured themselves,
12 including the aid of one elder tenant who can't
13 himself climb the stairs. Our landlord hasn't
14 communicated with us about the situation in over a
15 month but mentioned offhand to one tenant that we
16 will be without an elevator until at least August.

17

Our landlord refuses to make
18 legally required repairs or to provide reasonable
19 accommodations. And thanks to the decisions of
20 this Board, our rents are still consistently
21 climbing while the conditions in our apartments
22 only get worse.

23

Despite all of this, I'm
24 supposed to consider myself lucky. Lucky that I
25 have a house at all, that I'm rent-stabilized in

1
2 spite of the decades-long of assault on rent
3 stabilization across this city. I consider myself
4 lucky even though my food service job and the rent
5 increases this Board has approved, have me paying
6 over 40 percent of my income in rent. I'm
7 considered lucky because the housing crisis in the
8 city and country are so dire and because landlords'
9 right to make a profit seems to somehow always
10 trump people's right to live in dignity.

11 Those in power in New York
12 should be embarrassed by the way, your housing
13 policies, including these untenable yearly written
14 increases, have led to a loss of 40 percent of the
15 black population in Crown Heights since the
16 Bloomberg era. Tenants and working-class people
17 are what make this city great, not to mention, make
18 it run at all or make it a city anyone actually
19 wants to live in. And you have a responsibility to
20 stop this cycle of displacement and gentrification
21 and keep people in their homes. I urge this Board
22 to reverse course and freeze or roll back the rent.

23 (Applause.)

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25 (Audience participation.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Mr.

3

Hollingsworth.

4

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Hi. Every

5

year this Board turns its back on renters, so I'm

6

going turn my back to them. And also, if they're

7

so inclined, they can kiss my ass.

8

So my name is Michael

9

Hollingsworth. I'm a lifelong Brooklynite. I am

10

-- I live here in Crown Heights, so welcome to my

11

neighborhood, and I'm going talk to you.

12

In August of 2022, after this

13

Board, at the direction of Eric Adams, hit us with

14

the largest rent increase in almost a decade, I was

15

at a tenant associated -- association meeting, and

16

an older black woman came up to me and she asked --

17

well, first she said she can't afford to hike. And

18

then she asked me, and I will never forget this,

19

she looked at me and she said, "Is there anything

20

Eric Adams can do to help us?"

21

Right? And I didn't want to

22

tell her that that would essentially be us asking

23

the arsonist to come back and put out the fire.

24

Right? But it was actually a teaching moment

25

because at that meeting, I found out, none of the

1

2 tenants, there were about 20 tenants, all black
3 working class; Eric Adams base. They -- none of
4 them knew about the RGB. They didn't know what it
5 does; they didn't know the mayor controls it. By
6 the end of the meeting, they all knew that.

7

8 And to a person, every one of
9 them said they were not voting for Eric Adams.
10 Again, and I'm telling this story because I think
11 it's important for us folks who show up here every
12 year to not just do this. What we have to do over
13 the course of the next year is we need to go -- in
14 other words, this is not -- our fight is not in
15 here. Right? Our fight is in our buildings, it's
16 in our blocks.

16

17 Right? Well, that -- yeah.
18 And also, we don't need to really talk to them;
19 these people behind us. We need to be talking to
20 our neighbors and let them know how the Board works
21 and more importantly, who controls it. Because the
22 only way we're going to start getting the justice
23 we're owed is if we get Eric Adams out of office.

23

(Applause.)

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: So that's

1

2 your task.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: And I

5

still have a couple of seconds, so I want to just

6

say something. I want -- the last thing I want to

7

say is thank you to our tenant reps. Thank you for

8

being part of this process even though it's a shame

9

to the folks in the middle. I know you're just

10

doing your job; whatever. But what I was taught

11

when I was a little kid was that if a job isn't

12

right, if it's immoral, you should quit.

13

(Applause.)

14

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: And to

15

the two landlord reps, I'm not sure if hell has a

16

place for landlords --

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank YOU.

18

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: -- but if

19

it does, I hope it's hot. And I hope the tenants

20

can hear you screaming in heaven.

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please

22

wrap it up. Thank you.

23

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Okay. And

24

that's it. Thank you.

25

(Applause).

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

Our next, our next three speakers will be Denise

4

Clay, Isabelle Munoz, and Camille Sosa.

5

Denise Clay?

6

MS. CLAY: Good evening.

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

MS. CLAY: I'm here as a

9

tenant of an expiring 421A building for

10

middle-income families in South Slope. And I'm

11

here on behalf of my tenant association to ask for

12

a 0 percent rent increase.

13

(Applause.)

14

MS. CLAY: Firefighters, public

15

school teachers, social workers, nurses, nonprofit

16

employees, retired folks who are on fixed incomes;

17

these are the tenants who pay thousands of dollars

18

each month into my building. Many have lived in

19

the building for dozens of years, we pay our rent

20

on time, we have pride in our homes, we keep up our

21

end of the bargain, however, we are met with an

22

owner and management company who actively neglect

23

the building, who have a history of lying and

24

deceiving tenants about their rent-stabilized

25

status, having us sign illegal riders.

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25

For longer than the 11 years I've lived in the building, that deceived them about their protections is rent-stabilized tenants, they've illegally asked for more money after leases have been signed. Our elevator has been out of service dozens of times in the last year, sometimes for weeks at a time, chronic leaks, accruing violation.

We often hear landlords say they need a big increase so they can maintain the buildings; we've heard that tonight. In fact, however, this is simply not the case. We need garbage cans. The owners of my building have in fact actively worked to decrease their rent roll, warehousing a dozen units at highest count as they try to run down the clock of the 421A.

When apartments do go on the market, the rent is far from affordable.

One-bedroom apartments in our rent-stabilized building, which are not updated, are currently being listed for \$3,100 a month.

The rent rule is not the issue; the issue is greed. I teach my children who are 8 and 10, the difference between right and

1

2 wrong. And I'd like to ask you all tonight to
3 please do the right thing by myself, the folks in
4 this room, and all of the rent-stabilized tenants
5 in our city. Thank you.

6

(Applause).

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

MS. MUNOZ: Hello. Good

9 evening. My name is Isabel Munoz. I am a mother
10 and I live at 227 23rd Street in Sunset Park,
11 Brooklyn, New York. I'm a member of the Brooklyn
12 Tenants United Group.

13

Today I am here to talk to you

14

about the rent increase and I would like to tell

15

you that it is not fair that the rent increases.

16

The increase in rent affects me a lot since I do

17

not spend enough time with my family, I do not

18

attend school activities with my children, such as

19

trips or parent meetings; I am missing important

20

moments and all because I have to work to pay the

21

rent. It worries me a lot and affects me

22

emotionally and financially.

23

Today I am here to ask that

24

the rent not increase. I am here to ask you for 0

25

percent. I also want to add, it's not fair for the

1
2 landlords to come and ask for their rent to be
3 increased when they're not actually making repairs.
4 When they don't -- ask, they don't fix anything,
5 and you ask them to do something and they do not do
6 it. In my specific case, I have a light that just
7 doesn't work in the summertime and it's year after
8 year that I ask them to fix it and it's not being
9 fixed. And it's like, you know, why are they
10 asking for an increase when they can't even fix
11 something so simple? Gracias.

12 (Applause).

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
14 Muchas Gracias.

15 The next three speakers after
16 Ms. Sosa will be Nora Guertero, Geraldine Sosa, and
17 Christina Robles. Please go ahead. Thank you.

18 MS. CAMILLE SOSA: The
19 greatest of an -- the greatness of a nation can be
20 judged by the way it treats its weakest member.
21 Good afternoon, members of the Board. My name is
22 Camille Sosa. I'm 17 years old and a resident of
23 Sunset Park, Brooklyn. I'm also a member of the
24 Brooklyn Tenants United Group.

25 I stand here today to speak

1

2 about the effects your decision on a rent increase
3 can have on thousands of disadvantaged New Yorkers
4 with New York already having one of the highest
5 populations of homelessness. It is only
6 unavoidable that this number will rise with a rent
7 increase with thousands of New Yorkers already
8 struggling to have a substantial way of living due
9 to the prices.

10

I've seen families that are
11 broken down because of the inability to spend time
12 within each other, mine included. New Yorkers
13 would have to put work above family. Who is there
14 to guide a child when their parents are too busy
15 working to pay attention to them? Housing is a
16 human right and it should be treated as such.

17

In this economy with the
18 prices of basic necessities rising day by day, not
19 everyone has the luxury to be able to afford such a
20 raise. If landlords want an increase, they must be
21 able to fulfill our needs; make repairs when we
22 need them, and overall stop harassment and the
23 random evictions by which the stories here tonight
24 have clearly not stopped. I therefore not just
25 ask, but demand a no rent increase. The decision

1

2 is upon your hands and you must make the right one.

3 What do we want? When? Thank you.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

6

so much.

7

MS GUERTERO: Good evening.

8

My name is Nora Guertero and I live in Sunset Park,

9

Brooklyn. I am a member of Brooklyn Tenants

10

United. Throughout the years, we have asked for no

11

rent increases, landlords have said that these rent

12

increases are necessary for repairs and maintenance

13

in their buildings. Have any of you members of the

14

panel gone to one of the thousands, millions of

15

apartments where there are -- there is no heat or

16

hot water? My neighbors in the building next door

17

went a month without heat.

18

In the Bronx, part of a

19

building collapsed, and in Sunset Park, a façade

20

fell and killed someone. Have you seen a building

21

in Manhattan that is completely damaged and has not

22

been fixed? How can you plan to increase rent when

23

there aren't even repairs being done? We have been

24

lied to and continue being lied to about these

25

large expenses. No, I do not agree with any rent

1

2 increase to our apartments.

3

4 Those from the RGB who
5 advocate for tenants to support us more, we ask
6 that you listen to us; do not allow an increase.
7 Defend us. What do we want? 0 percent.

8

(Audience participation.)

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Muchas
10 gracias. Thank you.

11

Geraldine Sosa? Geraldine
12 Sosa?

13

MS. GERALDINE SOSA: Hi. My
14 name is Geraldine Sosa and I'm 13 years old and I
15 live in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York, and I'm a
16 member of Brooklyn Tenants United Group.

17

(Applause.)

18

MS. GERALDINE SOSA: I'm here
19 -- I'm here to talk about why I don't want rent
20 money to go up. One reason I don't want rent to go
21 up is because I won't have enough time to spend
22 with my mom and I'll barely see her. And every
23 time I always want to spend time with her because
24 she helps me with stuff, she won't end up. Like
25 every time if she comes back from work, she won't
end up talking or helping me with homework and

1

2 other reasons. She'll be exhausted and end up
3 sleeping.

4

Another reason is that my
5 parents won't afford food or clothes due to rent
6 money going up. Food is expensive now due to
7 inflation. My parents' priority will now be about
8 making a lot of money to afford rent. Thank you
9 for listening.

10

(Audience participation.)

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

12

so much.

13

Christina Robles, Thank you.

14

MS. ROBLES: Good afternoon.

15

I'm Christina Robles and I'm a member of the
16 Brooklyn Tenants United from Sunset Park. I have
17 lived in Sunset Park for 20 years. Never in my
18 life have I seen this type of increase in rent. I
19 am the only person that works in my household. And
20 it -- you know, I don't sleep enough because of it.
21 Since they said that they were going to increase
22 the rent, I have not slept well since. I'm waking
23 up at two o'clock in the morning, and then I don't
24 go back to sleep.

25

I don't want to leave Sunset

1

2 Park because my doctors are right there, my church
3 is there. I have my neighbors where I go to the
4 meeting at the council members place where it's at
5 Marcella and Alexa, Avilez, that they're my like
6 bastion. I don't want the rent to increase because
7 no -- for me, the rent increase is 0 percent.

8

(Audience participation.)

9

MS. ROBLES: And the mayor
10 needs to remember that he lived in Sunset. Well,
11 he lived in Brooklyn and he was also poor like how
12 we are.

13

(Audience participation.)

14

MS. ROBLES: And he needs to
15 remember that we are the ones that brought him up.
16 And to end it, I just want to say that the tenants
17 united will never be defeated.

18

(Audience participation.)

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
20 so much.

21

MS. ROBLES: Thank you very

22

much.

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24

Our -- our next three speakers will be Honorable

25

Lincoln Restler from the New York City Council, Ian

1

2 Huntley, and Ikram Ramadani (phonetic).

3

MR. WRESTLER: Good evening.

4

My name is Lincoln Wrestler and I am a council

5

member representing downtown Brooklyn in North

6

Brooklyn.

7

I want to thank the members of

8

the Rent Guidelines Board, For being here tonight,

9

and I want to thank this extraordinary coalition of

10

tenants for showing up like you always do.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

MR. WRESTLER: One out of

13

three tenants in New York City, pays a majority of

14

their income in rent. Think about that. Every

15

third New Yorker is struggling to get by. We are

16

facing an affordability crisis of unprecedented

17

proportions. People are struggling. And

18

unfortunately, Mayor Adams and the Rent Guidelines

19

Board that he has appointed has operated not like a

20

Democrat, but like his Republican predecessors.

21

We have gone back to the

22

Giuliani and the Bloomberg years and seen rent

23

increases that are quite simply unsustainable for

24

working-class New Yorkers. After increasing rents

25

by 3.25 percent in 2022, 3 percent percent in 2023,

1

2 we have already -- and 5 percent on two-year leases
3 from 2022.

4 People are struggling. People
5 have already experienced significant rent
6 increases. And what we need right now is for the
7 Rent Guidelines Board and Mayor Adams to start
8 course correcting. We cannot afford to see more
9 New Yorkers unable to -- to pay their rent forced
10 into our shelter system because of the increases of
11 this Board.

12 Our rent-regulated housing
13 stock has been the bulwark that has kept our city
14 -- has give -- has ensured that a million New
15 Yorkers are able to access what should be
16 affordable housing. But with every wrong decision
17 of the Rent guidelines Board, we lose that
18 affordable housing stock. Unit by unit
19 working-class families, folks on a fixed income
20 cannot get by. And so what we're asking of you to
21 is to freeze the rent. No more rent increases.

22 (Audience participation.)

23 This is what is required to
24 preserve the affordability that is a distant dream
25 for so many New Yorkers.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

This is what is required to keep our rent-regulated housing stock affordable to the people who are with us here tonight. We need your leadership. We need your courage because that is what the tenants of New York City demand and deserve and require.

8

9

10

11

We are going to keep fighting until we get the justice that we deserve from the Rent Guidelines Board and Mayor Adams, thank you so much.

12

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

(Audience participation.)

14

15

16

17

18

MR. HUNTLEY: I'm going to take a page out of Michael's book because I was so perfect because you all are the people in the room that really matter. Because we know that this is just a shame here.

19

20

21

22

23

So I'm glad to be standing with you this evening. My name is Ian Terrell Huntley. I'm a third-generation Brooklynite. I am a tenant, a renter, and I am running an Assembly District 56 Bed-Stuy and Crown Heights.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

MR. HUNTLEY: As a tenant, as

1

2 a renter, as a person who understands in living in
3 a rent-stabilized apartment, someone who
4 understands like you, what you're -- what we're
5 facing here, unlike the people -- I mean, we've got
6 some good people here; the tenants who are with us,
7 who understand what we're facing, but we've got
8 these others who represent the establishment; the
9 people that have failed us and not deliver for us.

10 I'm also proud to say I'm a
11 member of NYCC at Tenet. People who are -- I'm a
12 member of tenant movements and organizations long
13 before I've stepped up as a candidate to be it.
14 And also to speak before you this evening, I'm a
15 part of a history of people fighting like you all.
16 What you're all doing right now, why we're here.
17 Because we understand what we're facing.

18 I know what it means to be
19 making a choice between paying for daycare and
20 paying for rent. I know what it means to be
21 worrying about going to the doctor and making a
22 choice and having a -- to not go to the doctor
23 because I have to pay rent.

24 And this is in a
25 rent-stabilized apartment that I've lived in for 12

1

2 years now. And I can't even imagine what I am
3 facing. And it's a tax abatement.

4 So this only exists because we
5 decided to give a developer some money so he can do
6 this out of the kindness of his heart. This is all
7 nonsense that we need to be fighting and doing more
8 to change. And this is why we need to be fighting
9 for rent freeze, rollback of rents, but also
10 universal rent control and rent stability, and more
11 affordable housing.

12 (Audience participation.)

13 MR. HUNTLEY: True affordable
14 housing not with these developers, these
15 millionaire and billionaire developers, are putting
16 in our communities without regard for what it is.

17 I've lived in Bed-Stuy since
18 2009. I've seen my people be priced and pushed
19 out. People just like me, who've decided, you
20 know, who want to set up roots or have had roots
21 there who cannot stay there because their community
22 has been sold off by politicians who represented
23 establishment and represent the real estate
24 interest instead of the people of the community.

25 And we have an opportunity and

1

2 -- Assembly District 56, with this primary in the
3 15th and early voting and June 25th, to vote for
4 someone who actually understands --

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank
6 you.

7 MR. HUNTLEY: -- what you're
8 going through, and is doing with it and will fight
9 all the way in Albany is fighting with you right
10 now.

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
12 so much.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: While
15 we're waiting for our next speaker, our next three
16 -- thank you.

17 (Audience participation.)

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next
19 three speakers -- thank you -- will be the
20 Honorable Shahan Hanif our New York City Council
21 member, Patricia Outlaw, and Fabian Bravo.

22 MS. HANIF: Good evening,
23 everyone. I'm council member Shahana Hanif. Power
24 to all the tenants.

25 (Applause.)

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MS. HANIF: I'm grateful to be with you all. I know that folks from the 5th Avenue Committee are here. I see you all 63 Tiffany Place. Thank you for showing up. But it is unfortunate that you have to show up. It is untenable what is happening to rent stabilization in our city.

We should be talking about how we protect rent stabilization. We should not keep coming back to hear about how much more you all should give to live in New York City. That should not be the conversation.

I was here last year and you know, we all caused a ruckus last year and the year before. And nothing has changed over the last couple of years. Right? One pathway is for fire him. And the other is to support legislators that are with you all.

And I'm so grateful that my colleague Council Member Lincoln Restler was here, Council Member Crystal Hudson was here, and Ian Huntley, who I'm supporting, is also here.

And we need the voice of residents. We need the voice of renters presented

1

2 in our legislature.

3

4 Now, I'm here to just affirm
5 that my commitment and my fight remains for a rent
6 rollback. That is what I'm here for. So that you
7 all know -- and of course I'm going to submit my
8 testimony online, but I wanted to show my face to
9 the renters here because I know what's going on,
10 and council members across New York City are seeing
11 what is happening to families.

12

13 The 13-year-old who just spoke
14 should not be spending her time testifying at an
15 RGB hearing. That is outrageous. There was a
16 woman here in a wheelchair who has come all the way
17 to testify and she's waiting and there's so many
18 folks who could not make it. So I want you to know
19 that when your legislator shows up, they are here
20 for those who could not make it out because it
21 shouldn't be on you to keep fighting to survive in
22 this city.

23

24 And so we're with you. Tenant
25 power has always been foundational to the mosaic
26 and the fabric of New York City. Renters keep the
27 city going and we will win a rent rollback. Thank
28 you all so much.

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

Patricia Outlaw? Patricia

5

Outlaw?

6

(Audience participation.)

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am, do

8

you want to wait just a moment? Thank you.

9

Please, thank you.

10

MS. DAVIS: Good evening

11

everybody. My name is Charlene Davis. I live in

12

Coney Island. I'm here to represent those who are

13

disabled, who cannot get out to speak at these

14

things. It was very --

15

(Audience participation.)

16

MS. DAVIS: -- it was very

17

difficult for me, but I made the decision to get

18

involved in my community. I joined the community

19

board, which is Community Board 13. I am not

20

speaking for Community Board 13. I'm speaking for

21

myself as a resident, as a tenant, as a disabled

22

person, as a person who lives on a fixed income.

23

Every month, it's very hard

24

for me to pay my bills. I have to decide which

25

bill I'm going to pay. I pay my rent regularly on

1

2 a regular basis because as my grandmother always
3 said to me, you have got to have a window to throw
4 your mess out of. If you ain't got a window to
5 throw your mess out, then you are up creek without
6 a paddle.

7 I would ask that this Board
8 would consider holding landlords responsible, more
9 responsible, for not making timely repairs, decent
10 repairs, not patching up stuff, but doing exactly
11 what it takes to make it stay stable.

12 They need to hold them
13 accountable. They need to give tenants an
14 abatement for having to live with the conditions
15 that they have. It's not right. You're still
16 getting the same amount of money, even when
17 agencies come and they help you to pay your rent.
18 Public assistance helps to pay the rent. Catholic
19 Charities help to pay the rent. The Jewish
20 committees and stuff, they help you to pay your
21 rent as well. But once that rent is paid, you
22 still have the same issues and the same problems.

23 Hold these landlords
24 responsible, get in their pockets. When you start
25 getting in their pockets and making them open up

1

2 their books to show where all this money is going
3 to. I bet you things will change. Thank you for
4 allowing me to speak.

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
6 so much, ma'am. Thank you.

7

(Audience participation.).

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9

Is Patricia Outlaw here? Patricia Outlaw?

10

We'll try then Fabian Bravo?

11

Please. Thank you. Oh, I'm sorry?

12

FEMALE VOICE 1:

13

(Unintelligible.).

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Are you

15

signed up ma'am?

16

FEMALE VOICE 1:

17

(Unintelligible.).

18

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have a

19

number of folks, but if you want to sign up, we're

20

happy to -- we'll be happy to hear you. Of course.

21

(Audience participation.)

22

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: You're

23

speaking on her behalf? That's fine. Please.

24

MS. OUTLAW: Okay. My name is

25

Melinda Outlaw. I've lived in this neighborhood

1

2 and raised my children -- how many years? 82.

3 What's that? 42 years. Yeah. For 42 years. Now

4 I'm on retired fixed income and the rent going up.

5 And not only that, well luckily don't pay

6 electricity, but they've increased the AC course

7 because now they're charging everybody for ac.

8

As I went around, I got the

9 information last minute, I went around to the seven

10 buildings in my neighborhood right across the

11 street; Ebbets Field just before we started it was

12 the flooding one of the buildings.

13

Two weeks, about a week ago.

14 There's three buildings attached to each other

15 along the side of Montgomery. All our wards were

16 shut off because of repairs. I mean, repairs are

17 being done, but they patch up work. And now they

18 want to increase and they're not really fixing the

19 work, you know? I don't know.

20

I'm hoping a lot of things are

21 here because I went around my buildings and put up

22 so people can come up. Okay. I went around my

23 building to put up signs to say, come on over.

24 Speak out for what we have to speak out for. At

25 least show up to let them know that we're here.

1

2

The landlord's increasing this
rent and, but what are we getting from it?

3

4

(Audience participation.)

5

6

MS. OUTLAW: It's packed up,
like packed up.

7

8

And then now, like I said, I'm
going to fix income and it's going up and what are
we getting for it though, you know? Thanks.

9

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Mr. Bravo?

13

14

MR. BRAVO: My name is Fabian,
and I work with Neighbors Helping Neighbors and I
live in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York. The RGB
needs to make a just and equitable decision; this
is the essence in which the RGB was formed. The
voices of the community form an echo, from the
apartments to offices, and it says the rent is too
high. They also say the Rent Guidelines Board is
failing us.

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

Evidently, you are failing us.

23

And despite all of the evidence that we present,

24

the increase is favoring landlords. I constantly

25

help tenants who are being harassed by their

1

2 landlords who threaten tenants with calling
3 immigration. They also threaten them with text
4 messages and intimidate them with calls during the
5 night.

6 The landlords accept rent only
7 in cash. And you know why the landlords accept
8 rent only in cash? It's to not pay their taxes
9 because it's a tactic that they use to take tenants
10 to court.

11 Landlords are sly and depraved
12 and have no compassion. However, we have faith
13 that in this occasion, you all will not increase
14 the rent.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. BRAVO: We know that in
17 your heart there was a seed of compassion and
18 goodness. Compassion should exist within you. We
19 can see it in your eyes and you should not increase
20 the rent. What do we want? 0 percent. When do we
21 want it? Now.

22 (Audience participation.)

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
24 Thank you.

25 Our next three speakers will

1

2 be Clara Perez Joseph, Lorraine Taylor, and William
3 Vashansky (phonetic).

4

MS. PEREZ-JOSEPH: Good
5 evening, my neighbors, elected officials, and
6 members of the Board. My name is Clara Perez
7 Joseph. I've been involved with Brooklyn Tenants
8 United, and when they were called Enclino Sunizoz
9 (phonetic), I was a tenant leader for seven years.
10 I'm a member of Tenants PAC. I've lived in Crown
11 Heights for 58 years and pushing 80 years.

12

I'm here to let the RGB Board
13 know that the ethical decision is at best to roll
14 back the rent, and at least to freeze the rent.
15 Tenants -- and I say ethical because -- not because
16 -- we are not asking for it because we feel like
17 it, but because it really is intrinsically ethical.
18 Tenants --

19

(Applause.)

20

MS. PEREZ-JOSEPH: -- tenants
21 cannot afford these rent increases. The salaries
22 are going up. Inflation is chewing at the mega
23 income of many working families.

24

In 2019, the New York State
25 Senate and Assembly passed a series of laws to

1

2 protect tenants except MCI and good cause, which we
3 are still waiting for. Although they were
4 significant, in retaliation, the landlords are
5 trying to rip this progress apart. With the help
6 of the RGB board.

7 The landlords are destroying
8 the stability, as you have heard, of families and
9 neighborhoods and making worse, the homeless
10 situation in New York City. To our elected
11 officials in the house, some of you have been
12 supportive of tenants, and to those that you are
13 not have stalled to pass laws to protect the
14 tenants, you are contributing to urban blight, then
15 who will vote for you?

16 Vote and pass those bills into
17 law to protect us on the day that they are hurt.
18 The way we go out and vote for you to put you in
19 office. Housing is a human right and raising rents
20 at this time is anti-humanitarian. Please do not
21 sit; do not sit members of the Board. Do not sit
22 on this Board and think you are peacocks with
23 prestige for the power that you have been handed
24 over.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

1

2

MS. PEREZ-JOSEPH: That is a

3

privilege.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

5

MS. PEREZ-JOSEPH: Exercise

6

your power for good. Do the right thing. No more

7

red hikes. Housing is a human right. No more red

8

hikes, housing is a human right. Thank you.

9

(Audience participation.)

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11

Thank you.

12

Lorraine Taylor?

13

MS. TAYLOR: Good evening. I

14

just learned that our increase was 3 percent. They

15

raised mines to 4 percent. That shows you how

16

crooked my landlord is. I'll be asking for account

17

ledger tomorrow. Okay?

18

I just want to let you know,

19

you want to raise our rent again for what? We

20

still haven't addressed the last current issues.

21

Management don't even take our phone calls.

22

Voicemail is always full. Okay? But we pay our

23

monthly rent. Lack of communication.

24

We haven't had a lock on our

25

front door for security at Intercar (phonetic) for

1

2 over three years up the block of Bedford Avenue. I
3 didn't come far. No security.

4

5 You provide refurbished
6 refrigerators and ovens, which I was told it was
7 electric. But we pay a gas bill, okay? We don't
8 even have garbage cans. Garbage cans for 96
9 tenants. We got brownstone kids. Come up the
10 block, the rats will run all across your feet. We
11 have to choose when we dump our garbage. Day or
12 night, they eat them.

12

13 Okay? But you want to raise
14 our rent for what? We have super, one super for
15 six buildings. Six buildings. And where's our
16 repairs? Every year we go through research about
17 us. They always looking for another document. For
18 what?

18

19 And another thing, all these
20 people spoke about, their paychecks; they're doing
21 illegal stuff. Since when your hard work overtime
22 is included into your rent? Okay? That's a whole
23 separate issue. Look for the crooks amongst your
24 system and you will get money in your pockets.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

MS. TAYLOR: Is it not illegal

1

2 to be counting people overtime? Isn't that extra
3 money in they pocket? We don't even get that
4 anymore. Okay. You not enforcing the guidelines.

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
6 ma'am.

7

MS. TAYLOR: If you was doing
8 your job, one-year leases would be two-year leases
9 by now. So we wouldn't have to go through
10 research, research about us. Okay?

11

Did you run a so-called pilot
12 program? That's the big word. Pilot program. No,
13 you didn't because you didn't want know the truth.

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
15 ma'am.

16

MS. TAYLOR: Wait, I got two
17 more things, David,

18

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay,
19 thank you.

20

MS. TAYLOR: Bring the laws
21 into 20th century. 20th century, okay? Because
22 you need to sign the laws, revive them, addendum,
23 add changes. You know the word "change"? Both
24 sides can agree. Come to the table. Make your
25 dollars desperately seeking -- you desperately

1

2 seeking through dollars from your tenants, not the
3 landlords. Tell them to take down that scaffold
4 that they pay for six years. Okay?

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

7 MS. TAYLOR: Look for their
8 penalties and fine money. They owe thousands and
9 thousands and thousands of dollars a penalty. Get
10 the money from them.

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12 MS. TAYLOR: Your position and
13 your job is supposed to be for both sides. Let us
14 come together and meet in the middle. Goodnight.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
16 so much, ma'am.

17 (Applause.)

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next
19 three speakers after Mr. Vashansky will be Johnny
20 Rivera, Lenny McCullough, and Gordon Lee.

21 Please. Thank you.

22 MR. VASHASKY: Hello everyone.
23 My name is William. And I'm here advocating for 3
24 million poor New Yorkers that can't afford to pay
25 rent at all. All of these people are facing

1

2 eviction in housing court. I am one of them. I'm
3 going to be in eviction -- Brooklyn Eviction Court
4 tomorrow on the fifth floor. And I'm inviting
5 everybody in this auditorium to come for court
6 support. So come down tomorrow at 9:30 o'clock to
7 the fifth floor in Brooklyn Housing Court.

8

9 All these people are in the
10 process of being evicted and facing homelessness.
11 All of them can't sleep at night thinking when the
12 marshal is going to come knocking on the door.
13 They're going to wind up homeless. 3 million
14 people.

15

16 You can raise the rents for
17 the rich. Let the rich pay 4 percent, 5 percent, 6
18 percent; tax them. Leave the poor people alone and
19 give them a rent rolled back every year. And the
20 rich raise it 6 percent. They -- they tolerate it,
21 but the poor can't. They're winding up homeless in
22 the streets.

23

24 So just my thought is just not
25 raise the rent, roll it back for the poor, and tax
the rich. And come down to housing court tomorrow
at 9:30 o'clock 5th floor. I'll be there with
probably 30 other people. But I want to put 300

1

2 people in there, so the judge can see what's
3 happening. Thank you.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

5

Mr. Rivera? Johnny Rivera is next. Thank you.

6

Sir, tell me your name?

7

MR. LEE: My name is Mr.

8

Gordon Lee.

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.

10

You're coming up in two more speakers.

11

MR. LEE: All right.

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

13

very much.

14

Mr. Rivera?

15

Thank you, Mr. Lee.

16

MR. RIVERA: Hi. Good

17

evening. I don't know what to say when I come up

18

here. You know the nice law -- landlord manager

19

that sat right there by the name of Chris

20

(unintelligible) Bayridge, you know, he gave such a

21

sobbing story about his family. 40 years managing

22

buildings, how hard it is. Do you know how much a

23

building costs? Easily two to \$4 million a piece.

24

These are very rich millionaires who are crying

25

poverty.

1

2 landlords, they come here, literally didn't cry.
3 And then he sounded so sensible. If I didn't know
4 what he was or what he was doing, I would've
5 believed him. That's how good and effective the
6 campaign is.

7 I'm a tenant organizer at
8 Brooklyn Legal Service Corporation. I've been part
9 of 30 tenant associations. They cry. You know
10 why? Because they can't get repairs unlike you.
11 You make a phone call, it happens. Not with them.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13 MR. RIVERA: Zero increase.

14 (Applause.)

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
16 so much.

17 Lenny McCullough? McCullough?
18 Thank you. Thank you.

19 MS. MCCULLOUGH: Good evening.
20 I am totally disgusted at what I'm hearing here
21 today. How do you all sleep at night? That's what
22 I want to know. Do you know what I have in my
23 kitchen at night? I keep on the light so those
24 freaking rats don't run over my foot like I run
25 over my foot.

1

2

3

4

5

You talk about repairs, they come in, they patch up. That's all they do. And then they leave halfway through the job and you don't freaking hear from them.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

They half pass the tenant upstairs. So all the water when he accidentally -- not his fault, it comes down in my apartment and floods it. I've been living there 40 fucking years. I'm tired. I'm exhausted of this bullshit that's going on. It's making me sick. Do you understand that? It's making my children sick. You don't even know what they're using for repairs. God only knows. I am tired. You need to do something, not tomorrow; now. This is atrocious. It must stop.

17

(Audience participation.)

18

19

20

21

MS. MCCULLOUGH: I don't know what else to say. I'm just ashamed of you all. What do you tell your children? Huh? What are you telling them?

22

23

24

25

Every day outside I see homeless old women on the streets. They have no place to live. I have to ask them, "Did you eat today, my sister? Can I get you something to eat?"

1

2 There's nobody helping the people who need help.

3 Something must be done.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

7

After Mr. Lee, we will hear

8

from Winsome Pendergrass, Claudia P, and Melanie

9

Lewis.

10

Please go ahead, Mr. Lee.

11

MR. LEE: Yes. Goodnight. I

12

am Mr. Gordon Lee, but you can call me god. I'm a

13

member of all groups because I want to fight for

14

all important causes including housing and

15

healthcare and food security.

16

And I protested President

17

Nixon on my birthday of June 23rd, 1973. And I was

18

born when Watergate happened. I also protested

19

Gerald Ford.

20

Now I know that you Board

21

members, and landlords, and Mayor Adams don't care

22

anything about what we say and they want raise

23

rent. But you still have to give us a rent freeze

24

and rent rollback for another reason; to honor our

25

troops, Veterans, first responders, and men in

1

2 you said, many --

3

4 Mr. Lee.

5

6 thanks.

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

9 like they said many people, more people leaving New
10 York City or New York state, and they're forced to
11 live where tragic while animals encounters show up,
12 where abortion rights are restricted or banned,
13 voting rights too. And there's crime and drugs run
14 by Trump-supporting white supremacist criminals,
15 they harass assault voters --

16

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
17 Thank you, Mr. Lee. Mr. Lee, thank you. Thank you
18 very much.

19

MR. LEE: Okay. Goodnight.

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
21 very much. Thank you.

22

Our next speaker will be
23 Winsome Pendergrass. Thank you so much.

24

MS. PENDERGRASS: Members of
25 the RGB, good evening. My name is Winsome

1

2 Pendergrass. I am a member of New York Communities
3 for Change. Ladies and gentlemen of the RGB, the
4 rent is too damn high.

5

(Applause.)

6 MS. PENDERGRASS: I was priced
7 out of the community of the new Kirk era eight
8 years ago. I now live in Brownsville, 497 Chester
9 Street for the past seven and a half years. I am a
10 senior citizen with limited income.

11

12 My rent-stabilized apartment
13 is important to me and all the other people of
14 color living in this city. I can breathe and have
15 the assurance that my limited income won't be
16 swallowed up by high rent costs. It's important
17 because it keeps me in the neighborhood that have
18 grown to love and respect other people.

18

19 Since 2019 rent laws, real
20 estate lobbies spent -- listen to this -- \$13.56
21 million to lobby in Albany. Let me repeat that.
22 Since 2019, the real estate lobbies have spent
23 \$13.56 million to lobby in Albany for affordable
24 apartments to get rid of all the laws that keep us
25 there.

25

They had money to spend on

1
2 lobbying, but not on repairs, the rats, the
3 roaches, the mold, the falling ceilings are still
4 there for us to deal with. Why they slip money
5 under the counter to give to politician. And
6 somebody has bought -- a few politicians has bought
7 new summer houses somewhere, or their children
8 going to private school because they use us as a
9 cash cow.

10 Their net income in NOI are up
11 10.4 percent over the previous years. This
12 increase is historic. The fourth-highest jump in
13 the past 32 years --

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

15 MS. PENDERGRASS: -- and they
16 want more? Yes, sir. I hear you say thanks. I
17 want to say to you, rent freeze is an important
18 thing in our vocabulary. Rent roll back is
19 important. Do not increase. Zero percent. Zero
20 percent. I am calling on your humanity, your
21 heart, your decency. Think of the seniors.
22 130,000 children leaves out of a shelter in this
23 city every morning to go to school. That's a shame
24 on the richest city in the world. Think of the
25 history you are living in this city. You'll be out

1

2 of that seat one day. Each of you, as a Rent
3 Guidelines Board member, has the fate of working
4 New Yorkers in your hand and on your conscience.

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6

(Audience participation.)

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

Claudia P? Thank you.

9

MS. POWELL: Are we boring
10 you? My name is Claudia Powell.

11

I'm a born-bred and lifelong
12 Brooklynite and I'm part of the Lennox Tenant
13 Association in Park Slope.

14

A lot of people think Park
15 Slope is populated by wealthy owners and renters,
16 but there are plenty of working-class people who've
17 lived in this neighborhood their whole lives, and
18 I'm proud to be part of that population.

19

(Applause)

20

MS. POWELL: I'm here today to
21 urge the Rent Guidelines Board to vote not to
22 increase rent on rent-stabilized tenants. On
23 behalf of the tenants in my building, and the
24 Lennox Tenant Association, our landlords do
25 absolutely nothing to maintain the condition of

1

2 their building, despite continued complaints to
3 them and to 311. Whatever benefits they would reap
4 from a rent increase will not go towards the upkeep
5 of their building or improving our living
6 conditions.

7

(Audience participation.)

8

MS. POWELL: And yeah, and
9 garbage cans. You got that right, sister. An
10 increase won't even maintain our living conditions
11 as our landlords are letting the building fall into
12 disrepair and refuse to perform even basic
13 maintenance like roof and plumbing repairs or pest
14 control like rats and roaches, and God knows what
15 else is hanging around that building.

16

A rent increase would hurt me
17 personally because I'm still recovering financially
18 from losing my job in 2020 from the pandemic; the
19 first year of the pandemic, as are many of my
20 fellow tenants. Many of them are in the service
21 area working for the Department of Ed, the
22 administration for Children's Services, and other
23 nonprofit agencies.

24

They serve this city and like
25 me and fellow New Yorkers throughout the other

1

2 boroughs, they should be able to afford it. We
3 know that some members of this Board, and you all
4 know who you are, have vested interest in real
5 estate and which are in direct conflict with my
6 fellow New Yorkers, who struggled to pay our rent
7 and the necessities of life.

8 If Mayor Adams actually cares
9 about helping New Yorkers, then he should listen to
10 his own words. He said, and I quote, " It is clear
11 that the housing crisis in this big knot that's
12 sitting at the center of many of the problems that
13 the city is facing, one of the issues that remained
14 constant was housing, housing, housing. If I could
15 borrow from one of the great philosophers of our
16 time, the rent is just too high and people are
17 struggling. And it's not only low income.
18 Oftentimes when we talk about housing, we talk
19 about low income, but speak to that accountant and
20 that cook. Or if you work in a fast food
21 restaurant and you and your spouse are both being
22 paid minimum wage, then they're just hurdles to get
23 over."

24 So if the mayor and the Rent
25 Guidelines Board really want to help New Yorkers,

1

2 then I demand a rent freeze and no increase on
3 rent-stabilized buildings. And how you can all go
4 home to your fancy apartments and vote to increase
5 our rent is just beyond me. It's beyond me.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7 (Audience participation.)

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: After our
9 next speaker Melanie Lewis, we will hear from Olga
10 Ortega, Nidia Rodriguez, and Brayan Pagoda.

11 At about 7:15 o'clock or
12 thereabouts, we're going to take a brief break and
13 we'll come back. Thank you.

14 So, Melanie Lewis?

15 THE INTERPRETER: Hi, this is
16 Olga Ortega, and I am going to side-translate what
17 she wrote.

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.

19 MS. ORTEGA: Hello, my name is
20 Olga Ortega. I'm a member of the Neighbors Helping
21 Neighbors organization. I'm a resident of 223 23rd
22 Street, and I live in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

23 Today I want to explain why
24 I'm against the rent increase for this year. First
25 of all, I have many problems with my housing space

1

2 and the apartment. For years the previous
3 landlords have not made any repairs and they have
4 not been responsible for the maintenance in the
5 building and the landlord does not pay the fines
6 that the city has imposed on him.

7 Besides that, they have not
8 given us lease agreements in a while. As a matter
9 of fact, we even took our landlord to court, but he
10 never -- he or she -- never appeared and he or she
11 doesn't even pay the fines. In the winters, we
12 have no heat or hot water for many months.

13 The owner did not show up in
14 court for over a year because he doesn't care. We
15 have no electricity in like the public areas and
16 besides that, we only have like one income. Our
17 neighbors do not have hot water or have not had hot
18 water for 12 days. My husband is the only one that
19 works. And just like me, there are many families
20 that are undergoing these conditions.

21 For these reasons, I ask you
22 to think about us the community of families that
23 work very hard and do not want to be displaced from
24 their homes. Thank you. And goodnight. Housing
25 is a human right.

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

(Applause.)

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Nidia

5

Rodriguez?

6

THE INTERPRETER: Rodriguez?

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Rodriguez.

8

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good Evening.

9

My name is Nidia Rodriguez. I belong to Neighbors

10

Helping Neighbors. I'm here to tell you or to ask

11

you to take into account before you make a decision

12

to raise the rent.

13

Think about the children.

14

Don't think so much with your heads, but think more

15

with your hearts. Because a parent, if you

16

increase the rent, will have to make a decision to

17

either pay rent or pay for food.

18

So New York will become an

19

area of a space full of homeless people. So if New

20

York has a situation with homeless now, what do you

21

think is going happen if the rent goes up? A

22

parent has to have like four jobs to pay the rent

23

if the rent goes up.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Excuse me.

1

2 Sorry. Please allow the speaker to speak. Thank
3 you.

4

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please think a
5 little bit more, not so much with your heads, but
6 more with your hearts. Thank you.

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

Bryan Pagoda? Brian Pagoda.

9

Okay. Can we take a quick
10 break?

11

We're going to take a very
12 brief recess. We will be right back and we'll
13 continue with the testimony. Our first three
14 speakers after our break will be Cynthia Nams,
15 Kevin Fife, and Adam Crowbar. We'll be right back.
16 Thank you.

17

And registration. Please make
18 sure if you want to speak, you sign in. It closes
19 at 8 O'clock.

20

(A recess was taken.)

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Let's get
22 started. All right. Welcome back, we're going to
23 get started.

24

Cynthia Nams?

25

Is Cynthia here?

1

2

(No response.)

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Kevin

4

Fyfe. Oh, sorry. Oh, go ahead, please. So please

5

go ahead.

6

MR. FYFE: Hello, my name is

7

Kevin Fyfe. I'm here with members of my synagogue

8

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah. One of Judaism's

9

core concepts is Tikkun Olam or repairing the

10

world. Our tradition teaches that no individual is

11

solely responsible for making the world a better

12

place, but neither are they free to absolve

13

themselves of doing something. In other words,

14

everyone can do something, but no one has to do

15

everything.

16

So why am I here? Because I

17

live in a rent-stabilized apartment and I want to

18

do something about the cost of housing in this city

19

and urge you to do this. Your staff publishes

20

numerous reports on the state of the local housing

21

market, which include a lot of data; a lot of data.

22

But if you distill all that information, you're

23

left with a couple of key points from the most

24

recent data available. Landlord net operating

25

income, as you've heard right, went up more than 10

1

2 percent on average, but the wages of people who
3 work in the city decreased in both nominal and real
4 terms.

5 This is simply not a
6 sustainable situation and it will only get worse as
7 rents continue to rise. In addition, the Federal
8 Reserve has stated that rent increases continue to
9 be a major contributor to ongoing inflation
10 nationwide. The city is undoubtedly mired in a
11 housing affordability crisis and the Board cannot
12 fix that alone. But you do have the power to do
13 something. You can keep over a million apartments
14 affordable and you can help to slow a key driver of
15 inflation.

16 You can and should approve a
17 rent rollback for the 24, 25 lease-term. Thank you
18 for your time.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Let me
22 just ask again, if Melanie Lewis is here or Cynthia
23 Nams.

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.

1

2 Adam Graubart, okay. And, Adam, just so I can let
3 the next three folks know --

4

MR. GRAUBART: Mm-hmm

5

(affirmative).

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: -- Amy

7

Clark, Maria Cortez, and Flor Morian. Please go

8

ahead. Thank you.

9

MR. GRAUBART: Good evening.

10

My name is Adam Graubart, and I serve as a

11

Cooperberg (Indiscernible) Rabbinical intern at

12

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah. I'm testifying

13

today because Jewish tradition charges me to

14

protect poor working-class and middle-class New

15

Yorkers in the midst of a housing crisis. A rent

16

rollback is an essential tool to keep our housing

17

stock affordable.

18

On the holiday of Sukkot, many

19

Jews dwell in temporary shelters and enjoy the fall

20

harvest. However, Moses Maimonides said that

21

whoever feast without feeding the poor has failed

22

to fulfill the obligations of the festival. In a

23

time of relative abundance, we must use power and

24

privilege to think of those with fewer resources.

25

We live in the wealthiest city in the world, yet we

1

2 failed to house everyone around us. Landlords saw
3 a 10.4 percent increase in net operating income,
4 yet they are hiking rents on New Yorkers. You are
5 rent -- hiking rents on New Yorkers already
6 struggling to afford rent.

7 Another rent hike, resulting
8 in an aggregated eight to 10 percent jump in the
9 last three years, puts many New Yorkers on the
10 brink of rent burden, eviction, and displacement.
11 In our city of relative abundance, you need to
12 implement a rent rollback for these New Yorkers.
13 Moreover, stable housing has helped American Jews
14 and others gain a foothold in this city for
15 decades. Due to stable affordable rents, my
16 grandparents, the children of immigrants, made
17 lifelong friends in New York, attended public
18 schools, and began careers here.

19 Rent stability was essential
20 to -- in their time, and it is essential in ours.
21 I plead you to use your power to maintain our moral
22 integrity and historical legacy. Thousands of
23 immigrant working-class and middle-class New
24 Yorkers require rent-stabilized apartments to live
25 and thrive in our city during this affordability

1

2 and eviction crisis, we need a rent rollback now.

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6 Amy Clark? Is Amy here? Amy Clark?

7 (No response.)

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Maria

9 Cortez?

10 (No response.)

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.

12 Flor Morian? Thank you.

13 MS. MORIAN: Good evening. My

14 name is Flor Moran. I live in Sunset Park,

15 Brooklyn and I'm a member of Brooklyn Tenants

16 United. Thank you to the Rent Guidelines Board and

17 the public for listening to me. I hope that you

18 can help us and that everything turns out positive.

19 I'm here to speak about the

20 rent increases that we're experiencing in these

21 difficult times with so many costs and that I

22 personally cannot afford it with the income I earn.

23 Hopefully you all have some consideration.

24 Tenants are going through very

25 bad times. Apartments are in horrible conditions

1

2 and the landlords say they will not make repairs so
3 that we can leave our apartments. I have been told
4 this and they're racists.

5

6 The rent increase will affect
7 me because I will have to work more and I will have
8 to look for assistance. And this will occur all
9 the time. Additionally, the building is dirty and
10 there are rats, roaches and this affects my
11 family's health.

12

13 I am here to support everyone
14 who needs it. And thank you to the Organization,
15 Neighbors Helping Neighbors, for fighting for our
16 rights. What do we want? Zero percent, zero
17 percent increase. Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
20 Flor Moran and then our next three speakers will be
21 Shasta Spicer. Shasta Spicer, Amy Collaelo, and
22 A.M. Goodridge.

23

24 THE INTERPRETER: That was Flo
25 Moran.

26

27 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Oh, that
28 was Flo. Okay.

29

30 THE INTERPRETER: Yeah.

31

32 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

1

2 Sorry. Shasta Spicer?

3

(No response.)

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay. Amy

5

Collaello?

6

MS. COLLAELO: Good afternoon

7

to our tenant representatives only. My name is Amy

8

Collaello and I'm a tenant organizer with the

9

Bushwick Housing Independence Project or Be-Hip.

10

I'm here today to talk on behalf of all of the

11

Bushwick tenants who couldn't be here. Some who

12

couldn't come but plan on submitting their written

13

comments, but many who still after 50 years don't

14

even know this process exists and is for them.

15

For a Board that is meant to

16

hear from as many sides as possible, we have hardly

17

to see any announcements, public educations,

18

anything encouraging as many New Yorkers as

19

possible to come here today or getting them to

20

commit to submitting their comments. This city

21

pumps so much money into ads to get people to buy

22

and to do everything except for fight for their

23

homes or to make it easier for them to access real

24

resources.

25

Being the butt of the jokes

1

2 about Bushwick just being, you know, hipsters and
3 bars and artsy stuff, you know, painted as a lost
4 neighborhood, similarly to Williamsburg. I'm sure
5 you know that there are still working class
6 families and low income families living there.
7 It's a shame that this Board doesn't prioritize
8 outreach to them.

9 This year, most people that
10 we've met with have no idea if they're
11 rent-stabilized because their landlords make their
12 own rules. Deciding what their rent will be,
13 regardless as to the modest increases that you all
14 decide, except for our tenant reps and even
15 deciding whether or not an apartment is
16 rent-stabilized anymore, not going through the
17 proper channels with DHCR.

18 During my short time
19 organizing, I do want to share a story about a
20 specific tenant that I still think about every day.
21 During my short time organizing in Bushwick, this
22 is the worst conditions that I've ever seen. I've
23 mainly worked in Queens, now working in Bushwick.
24 I've never seen conditions like this.

25 I once met with a woman who

1
2 lives off of a wike-off building. She was six
3 months pregnant and she had a 2-year-old son. They
4 were living in such a way I had to fight back tears
5 as she attempted to show me around. I think about
6 her every day. It was a railroad apartment that
7 was chopped in half. It was so tiny, no
8 ventilation and the tiny bathrooms only vent --
9 there was only one window in the entire apartment.
10 Had so much mold, it was growing out and taking
11 over her ceiling. The building was in such
12 terrible shape and it seemed that almost all of the
13 apartments were chopped into two. So the landlords
14 figured out how to double, triple their reward. So
15 I asked the Board --

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

17 MS. COLLAELO: -- do you think
18 that this is worth giving more money to landlords?
19 We're asking for a rent rollback and to stop lining
20 landlords' pockets. Please consider New Yorkers,
21 everyday New Yorkers, not just the BS landlords
22 that come here to cry war.

23 (Applause.)

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25 Thank you. A.M Goodrich. Our next three will --

1

2 oh, are you here? Thank you. And after Mr.
3 Goodridge, Torintia Carol, Mimi Mitchell, and
4 Lindsay Bients.

5 MR. GOODRIDGE: Good evening,
6 Board members. So, I'm A.M. Goodridge and I'm part
7 of DSA, Democratic Social of America. So we have a
8 lot of children in the rent-stabilized building
9 because they been negative affected by it. So yes,
10 we in house a crisis, but we're in a foreclosure
11 crisis.

12 For every building that were
13 affected, they -- anywhere that affect them --
14 affected by inflation and of course -- and of
15 course the green landlord. This is what happened
16 where -- way back over eight years ago for New
17 Yorkers and Suburb Hill; we got rezoning. Fail to
18 build the de Blasio Administration. And how many
19 rented our building that in East York, Seventh
20 Hill? We don't know about not a damn thing. So
21 corruption is no joke.

22 So, we struggle making --
23 everybody struggles, especially we have childcare.
24 Now we deal with all the migrant crisis. Oh, what
25 country that come from. Why are we paying to pay

1

2 all this bullshit for this hotel that we go pay for
3 before?

4

That's seriously unacceptable,
5 this fun game. Yeah, there should be a one-term
6 mayor and a one-turn swagger. So we terminately
7 stay up, step up and writes up (unintelligible)
8 English, Spain, Chinese, Russian, Polish,
9 (unintelligible). You need to step that game up.
10 So they fight. So, but if we say fight, if we say
11 get back, we say fight back. They say get back,
12 fight back.

13

(Applause.)

14

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

15

Torintia Carol? Torintia Carol?

16

(No response.)

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Mimi

18

Mitchell? Is Mimi Mitchell here?

19

(No response.)

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Lindsay

21

Bients? Lindsay, thank you.

22

MS. BIENTS: Good evening. My
23 name is Lindsay Bients. I am a recent addition to
24 the Crown Heights community. I moved here three
25 years ago, almost exactly. I was very pleased to

1

2 and we also want to see our communities stable.

3

I am a recent transplant (sic)
4 here as of three years ago, but many people in my
5 building have lived there for 10, 20, 30, even as
6 high as 40 years. People in my church have lived
7 in this neighborhood -- I attend St. George's
8 Episcopal Church in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

9 Historically Caribbean and Black American Church,
10 people have been attending there for 10, 20, 30,
11 40, 50, 60, 70 years. It is a majority senior
12 church. And it is now majority commuter church
13 because the rents have forced people out of this
14 community and out of their rent-stabilized
15 buildings.

16

And so in order to preserve
17 Bedford-Stuyvesant, to preserve Crown Heights, to
18 preserve these neighborhoods, and to stop forcing
19 people away from places where they would like to
20 live, where their families live, where people they
21 love live, we must have a rent rollback. Thank
22 you.

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24

(Applause.)

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next

1

2 three speakers will be Iris Nevis (phonetic), Louis
3 Rosaro, and Theresa Westerdahl.

4

Is Iris Nevis here?

5

(No response.)

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Louis

7

Rosaro?

8

(No response.)

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Theresa

10

Westerdahl?

11

FEMALE VOICE: Oh, she's right

12

outside. I'll go and get her.

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay,

14

thank you. We'll keep her card ready.

15

Maria de LaRosa?

16

(No response.)

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Christine

18

Nicholson?

19

MS. NICHOLSON: I'm here.

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay,

21

please. Thank you.

22

MS. NICHOLSON: Hi, good

23

evening. I'm Christine Nicholson. I've lived in

24

this community for over 15 years. I attended Clara

25

Barton High School, so this is my community through

1

2 and through. I've seen the changes, I've seen the
3 gentrification. Actually, this is my first time
4 attending a board meeting. So I'm excited to be
5 here. I'm also very sad and disappointed in
6 hearing everyone's testimony.

7

8 You all know the buildings
9 that we live in, we've lived in them forever; I
10 don't need to talk about repairs. It's all clear.

11

12 But I do need to talk about
13 advocating for not increasing the rent
14 stabilization and also a rollback as per needed.
15 We don't need another increase, we just had one. I
16 signed the lease myself. So I think that it's
17 commonsensical to you all who seem smart, educated,
18 and economically advanced to do the right thing and
19 not further put us in a deeper crisis than we
20 already are.

21

22 As a millennial, I'm smack dab
23 in the middle of it and it definitely seems like
24 there's nowhere to go; like the walls are kind of
25 caving in. And I just think that it is
mind-boggling. We kind of have to have a brain
around this, right? It's really common sense, it's
not -- this is not science. It's science actually,

1

2 but it's really just becoming worse and worse and I
3 just don't understand how.

4

5 Even my friends who are rich
6 and my friends who are poor, they're all
7 complaining. No one can even move because
8 everything is just so expensive. So, I think I
9 just appeal to you guys to do the right thing.
10 Whether or not you can, I just hope that you do.
11 Thank you for your time.

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12

(Audience participation.)

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Is Theresa
14 here? Theresa Westerdahl, please. Thank you.

15

(Audience participation.)

16

MS. WESTERDAHL: Hello. My
17 name is Theresa Westerdahl. I live in the
18 neighborhood. I serve on Community Board 9. I
19 live very close by. I am not a tenant, I am a
20 homeowner. And I've lived here -- oh, I'm a
21 homeowner. I pay a mortgage and I bought when my
22 daughter was born in 2005, very nearby. And I have
23 been going to hearings for CB9 for the City of Yes
24 Housing, Europe Subcommittee Meeting. I went to a
25 DCP hearing this week. And for my community board

1

2 specifically and I'm finding very frightening for
3 what's happening to tenants in my neighborhood.

4 You know, people are -- the
5 affordability and the keeping the rent stable is
6 the backbone of our city. Increasing the rent is
7 going to put people on the street. You hear the
8 problems, right? You hear the problems and I see
9 it every day. The pressure that is on my
10 neighborhood, that is on the tenants in our
11 neighborhood, landlords doing very divisive
12 undermining things to their apartments, their
13 lives. It's horrible to watch.

14 It's horrible when you see a
15 dumpster come and you see a tenant stuff get all
16 dumped out. It's horrible when you see a woman
17 crying on the street with her children that she had
18 been serving eviction notice, she doesn't know what
19 to do. You know, they're -- people are getting
20 kicked out of their housing. You see, especially
21 black and brown people, you see the census, you see
22 the statistics. They're leaving. I mean, I'm a
23 white lady that bought that, you know, has a
24 mortgage, you know. But I'm here to serve my
25 community and listen. And the rent needs to be

1

2 rolled back or kept the same. That's just my
3 opinion. So, good luck, everyone.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

5

(Audience participation.)

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7

Our next three speakers will be Andrew Bodiford,

8

Anthony Beckford, and Jamie Barnes.

9

Is Andrew Bodiford here?

10

(No response.)

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.

12

Anthony Beckford? Please, thank you.

13

MR. BECKFORD: My name is

14

Anthony Beckford. I'm a United States Marine Corps

15

veteran. I'm a father, a son, a community

16

advocate. I live in this community all my life. I

17

don't remember seeing any of you here be issued to

18

determine what happens in our community. That

19

right there does not seem right. That right there

20

is not housing justice. That right there is what

21

you call imperialism and that right there is

22

something that this country has been doing to us

23

for ages. And we will not stand for it in our

24

community.

25

We have been -- demand that

1

2 rent rollbacks for years. And instead of listening
3 to us as you're acting to do right now, you keep
4 going against our best interest. The people who
5 build this city, the people who ancestors bled to
6 make sure that the city continues to run. The
7 folks who still are here fighting to stay in their
8 community as you appease gentrifiers and appease
9 landlords and these corrupt reny representatives.

10 (Audience participation.)

11 MR. BECKFORD: So I'm here to
12 simply say a few things. Look within yourself,
13 Imagine you being an 80-year-old grandmother with
14 mold on her sealants, with her grandchildren crying
15 because they see the struggle. They see the
16 intergenerational struggle and trauma that you
17 produce every time you increase rent. That is
18 racism, that is injustice, that is classism. And
19 we will not stand for it anymore. You get
20 appointed, but it's a time -- by the time that we
21 remove all of you because you do not get appointed
22 for our behalf and our interest.

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MR. BECKFORD: It's time for
25 us to increase the measures upon you because you do

1

2 not represent us, not whatsoever. And for the
3 elected officials who will give us lip service and
4 not action, this is your warning. For the ones who
5 put you into power, we'll remove them from power.
6 Because we, the people will not stand for this
7 anymore. We are demanding. Don't thank me because
8 I will not say you're welcome. We are here to put
9 a proposal in demands.

10 We want zero increase. We
11 want rent rollbacks. Matter of fact, I'll even
12 give you a number, 35 percent rent rollbacks to
13 start with and a 10-year rent freeze. Thank you.

14 (Audience participation.)

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
16 Thank you. Jamie Barnes.

17 (Audience participation.)

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please go
19 ahead. Thank you.

20 MS. BARNES: Hi, good evening.
21 I'm a tenant born and raised here in Brooklyn, New
22 York. I just have a comment actually -- well
23 actually questions. One, no more rent increases at
24 all. No every couple of years of one percent, two
25 percent, and all of that. Also, just completely

1

2 freeze it. But my question is to the Board, who
3 decided to dismantle rent stabilization for New
4 York City residents by the year 2027? That's what
5 I want to know. Was it the Board or the Mayor
6 Adams? Who? Okay. And one last question. So
7 what is the expectation if the rent stabilization
8 is ended in New York City? What can we expect?
9 Can you answer?

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON:

11 (Unintelligible).

12

MS. BARNES: Okay. So Mayor
13 Adams is the boss, right? He's your boss, he puts
14 together the board. So don't you guys have any --

15

MS. AQUINO: If
16 rent-stabilized -- if the rent is increasing, we
17 are going to end up in the street. That's what's
18 going to happen. So I will not vote for any rent
19 increases. And I'm asking my fellow board members
20 to not increase the rent. I am the only
21 rent-stabilized tenant on this Board and I hear
22 your voices.

23

(Audience participation.)

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25

Thank you.

1

2

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4

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25

MS. BARNES: Okay. One last thing. Thank you for commenting. I appreciate it because I didn't know. And I just trying to learn and understand what to expect for after -- when 2027 comes, what's happening in each subsequent Mayoral administration. What can we expect as the tenants?

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

MS. BARNES: I mean, have they said anything to the Board? Like we'll have something else in place of the Board. That's what I really want to know. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you. Our next three speakers will be Shasta Spicer, Ms. Julia, Easterlin or Estergin, excuse me, and Carol McDonald.

So Ms. Spicer?

MS. SPICER: Yes. Good evening. My name is Shasta Spicer.

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON:

MS. SPICER: Thank you. I am a 35-year-old woman. I live in East New York, Brooklyn. And I didn't have anything prepared to write tonight. I just came to see what everything

1

2 was about and from what I can see, you guys already
3 know what's going on in the buildings. All of the
4 deterioration, all of the -- all of the complaints.
5 All of the hardworking people that are trying their
6 best to do what we have to do as together. Because
7 if we're living and we're paying rent, you guys
8 should be doing what we have to do for us to
9 sustain life and that's not happening.

10

And one thing that I want to
11 say, also, I want to talk to you guys for a moment
12 too, is that what's happening right now is that it
13 feels like it's basically extortion. Because
14 what's happening is that a lot of us are on fixed
15 incomes. and the fixed incomes are way below what
16 is being asked of us to -- exactly, the cost of
17 living is being too high. What also is happening
18 is that our young people we're going to college and
19 we're not getting the jobs that we go to college
20 for.

21

We're not even -- we're not
22 even making the money that we have in order to help
23 our parents or our families make the rent. And on
24 top of that, our economy is changing, which means
25 that the jobs are changing. Our elders are not

1

2 even able to work because the jobs that are
3 required, they don't even have the training. So
4 now they're going to have to go back and go train.
5 The younger people probably don't want to do
6 certain of those jobs or can't even get to them
7 because they don't have access.

8 So what I'm asking you guys is
9 to look at all of those things and not just, "Oh
10 wait, we need to make money as well because that's
11 a part of it or we need to do our part as well to
12 be able to even afford the rent."

13 So what I'm asking is for no
14 rent increase, rollbacks, and a freeze on the rent
15 until our economy gets better.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. SPICER: Because the
18 economy is not getting any better for any of us and
19 it's doing a disservice to all of us. So if we can
20 work together, is what we need to be doing. And
21 for anything that we can do to work together, we're
22 willing, but there are things that need to be in
23 place to protect us as well because we are the ones
24 that have been in these communities and
25 contributing the most. Thank you.

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

MS. MCNEILL: Hi. I don't

4

know if you have my paper there. My name is Sireal

5

McNeil. I'm 61 years old. I was born in 1963.

6

You know that was a great year, right; 1963? That

7

was a great year, right? A civil rights movement.

8

Everything was going down. When my mother moved

9

there in this apartment of Clinton Hills in 1966

10

and she raised five girls there. I went to P11,

11

which my granddaughter goes there now. I went to

12

Rothchild 113. I went to Erasmus Hall and

13

graduated on time with honors. And then I went to

14

Brooklyn College.

15

And I met Mayor Mary Cuomo

16

when he first ran and he asked me what did I want

17

to be and I said, I want to be a politician. Well,

18

he said it, but God made it. And that's all good.

19

So my apartment is

20

rent-stabilized. Of course, we have been tortured.

21

My mother has been tortured for the last 10 or 15

22

years. They came for me and when they came for me,

23

I came back for them, okay? My mother was almost

24

killed in that building in 1977.

25

She should technically own

1
2 that apartment because Clinton Hill should have
3 been a (unintelligible) 400 that is, like 395
4 words. That means that the building was going down
5 and the rent -- how they got it together, the
6 landlords got together and the people got together
7 and they took over the building. Now the landlords
8 getting the -- and after they get they tax credit,
9 then they want to shoot the rent up. So you want
10 me to pay you \$5,000? Most people don't even make
11 5,000, how can they pay you \$5,000?

12 So what they do is they have
13 their friends and they get the other tenants who
14 haven't been there the longest. I've been there
15 the longest. I'm not going nowhere. My mother
16 died in that building and she was on the floor for
17 two or three days. Not to mention she had 180
18 violations. And they was getting paid by Section
19 8. And they had the audacity to come in our door.
20 After two funerals that I had, I went to Brown
21 Memorial and grew up in Brown Memorial, okay? And
22 I'm still there.

23 And I'm still here in this
24 community. She also started the Carlton Avenue
25 Garden 30 years ago. They got with the people at

1

2 the garden. They tried to come after me, after my
3 daycare business, after my grandkids, harassing me,
4 breaking them out. They did all kinds of stuff,
5 but I'm still here. And I'm going to win because
6 we got power in numbers.

7

(Applause.)

8

MS. MCNEIL: Not to mention
9 that so far, this lady here has come out with me to
10 the landlords in the Williamsburg community two
11 years ago and we protested. This is billion dollar
12 companies. You all have trillions of dollars.
13 They are just greedy, they don't give a about us
14 and our kids in the future. It's called
15 regenification. It has to stop. Since that time,
16 two years ago, they bought my whole block and
17 pushed everybody out. But the McNeill's are here
18 to stay at the first black salon in there and we
19 are not going anywhere.

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21

MS. MCNEILL: Black power is
22 in the house.

23

(Audience participation.)

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25

Miss Julia Easterlin. Thank you.

1

2

MS. EASTERLIN: Good afternoon everybody. My name is Miss Julia Easterlin. I'm a member of Med. Council. I'm here --

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please.

6

MS. EASTERLIN: Calm down, calm down. 30 years ago, I joined the MED Counselor. And I want to know, like I said before, that was at One Police Plaza. How many people there is the tenant on this Board? How many peoples are tenants on this board? I'd asked that 30 years ago at One Police Plaza. I don't hear nobody. How many tenants is on this platform? Only you honey? Now, there may -- okay.

15

Reason why I asked that because when you are a landlord, I was a landlord too, now I'm a tenant. But thank God that everything so far so good, my landlord tried to convict me and my brother three times, but we won the case. Because God don't love ugly.

21

Now why I'm saying this because these -- that the lady say over there, they -- this come to find, I give you four Last. Why are the mayors appointing landlords? What happened to the tenants? They got rights. Okay, they got

25

1

2 rights. So I feel, like I said 30 years ago, you
3 should have five tenants and five landlords. Okay?

4 So at least they -- at least
5 they would help us out. And then the thing is that
6 these landlord slummy, I hid for all the tenants
7 that I'm building suffer for two, three years
8 because the man won't put no boiler. Now I'd like
9 to know why that we have to wait three days for
10 some throwing heating and hot water.

11 Okay, I want to hear it. I
12 don't hear nobody talking. And why we have to wait
13 when we call for the 311 that -- you all need to
14 get rid of 311 because some of them don't know
15 nothing and some of them do know something and they
16 scared.

17 Some are tell me the building
18 department -- we call the building department about
19 our building why we don't have no heat. So some
20 reason they got in there and found out he had a
21 whole lot of wires. He got four violations. So we
22 went down there, found out what happened here and
23 all that time why we have to wait 40 days for them
24 to come in. You got children, you got seniors,
25 what -- and you got disabled people. Why you have

1

2 to wait.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

4

ma'am.

5

MS. EASTERLIN: Why do you

6

have to wait 40 days for a boiler and three days to

7

get some heat? Because HPD don't want to do

8

nothing. There's another one --

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

10

MS. EASTERLIN: -- and the

11

inspectors is something else too. I want to know

12

why.

13

Now, before you never hear

14

Rent Guideline Board. We don't roll back nothing.

15

Get rid of Guidelines Board because you all didn't

16

have it before. Why you do it now? Because the

17

Mayor Adams, De DeBlasio -- what's the other one?

18

Bloomberg, all them landlords, so how you expect

19

for us to win these things and you all go back and

20

do the same thing?

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

22

ma'am. Thank you. Thank you, ma'am.

23

MS. EASTERLIN: Why is that?

24

I want to know. You all ain't answer me. Why?

25

Since you are a board member -- you are the board

1

2 member, you're supposed to answer the tenants why?
3 Because see, I was the landlord, but I feel to help
4 people that need to be help. I'm not stubborn
5 because my mother fought my grandmother always to
6 help people that need help. And I do that, I was
7 the landlord for a long time.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
9 ma'am.

10 MS. EASTERLIN: So my father
11 sold the house. And they wasn't (unintelligible)
12 to help people.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have a
14 number of speakers. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you.

15 MS. EASTERLIN: Well, nobody
16 answer my question. Tenant stated, talk about
17 that.

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

19 MS. EASTERLIN: Okay, but you
20 not answering my question.

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
22 ma'am.

23 MS. EASTERLIN: What you can
24 do for us since you board members? Get rid of the
25 Guideline Board, like you did before. Get rid of

1

2 it.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

MS. EASTERLIN: Okay, thank

5

you very much.

6

(Applause.)

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

Thank you. Our next speaker is Carol McDonald.

9

Carol McDonald?

10

Is Carol McDonald here?

11

(No response.)

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay.

13

Zana Davidson? Oh, that was the microphone. Our

14

next three speakers will be Zana Davidson, Jessica

15

Dunn, and Sarah Luzar.

16

FEMALE VOICE 2: I'm sorry, my

17

name -- I'm supposed to put my name on this?

18

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes,

19

there's a registration at the front desk. Thank

20

you.

21

MS. AQUINO: Nesto, you are

22

now on the 8:00. When is the last --

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Oh yes --

24

MS. AQUINO: -- can you --

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: -- but

1

2 they can -- she can still sign up.

3

MS. AQUINO: No, just tell
4 them because I think --

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Just a
6 reminder -- Liz, just a reminder, if you're here
7 and want to speak we're going to close the
8 registration desk shortly, so please go out and
9 register now.

10

Thank you, Liz. Thank you.

11

MS. MCDONALD: Hi, good
12 afternoon. My name is Ms. McDonald. I live in
13 Bedford-Stuyvesant at one --

14

(Audience participation.)

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Okay,
16 please let the speaker speak. Thank you. Go
17 ahead.

18

MS. MCDONALD: -- in one urban
19 strategy building. I'm sure you guys know, we
20 urban tragedy. I lived there for 12 years now. I
21 live with rocks, roach, I complain and I complain
22 and I complain. No one is listening. This is a
23 big organization. I'm sure you guys heard about
24 Urban Tragedy. They have many, many buildings that
25 the rent a raising. If you don't -- if you got a

1

2 two years or a one year, the rent raising. Nothing
3 during those building; Urban Strategy Building.

4

Right now in front my door, I
5 have a hole. I call them, no one coming out. This
6 is an organization. I'm paying my rent every
7 month. So what should I do, don't pay the rent?

8

I'm a hardworking person. I go to work and I pay
9 my rent. Even last night, the building - the --
10 the light in front my door was out. I call him
11 yesterday afternoon I say, "Hey, my light is out."

12

Today when I called -- when I called them, she --
13 the super didn't come. I said no, she doubted me.

14

Yeah, the super was there. I
15 said, "Mom, I live there and I'm telling you that
16 the thing -- those rent need to be rolled back and
17 stabilized." They don't need to go nowhere because

18

Urban Strategy is not doing anything in the

19

building. Please, I'm asking you. I complain I

20

call 911, I call everything that I could call about

21

this. Next thing I want to know that they're

22

putting up this building. They said this low

23

income family building. Right now, there's one on

24

broad Broadway.

25

I have been on that lease for

1

2 like 10 years and no one calling you low-income.

3 I'm working low income and no one calling you. But

4 you see other people can walk in and get right in

5 your neighborhood, right in your neighborhood. You

6 live right there --

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

8 ma'am.

9 MS. MCDONALD: -- and you see

10 these buildings are going up and you're putting in

11 for this building and you're not getting in.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

13 ma'am.

14 MS. MCDONALD: Thank you.

15 (Audience participation.)

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Is Zana

17 Davidson here?

18 MS. DAVIDSON: Good evening,

19 everyone. My name is Zana Davidson and I'm here

20 standing pleading for you guys to lower the rent.

21 I'm a single parent with three girls and last year

22 of the COVID, I'm a LK worker. I live in East New

23 York. My rent was \$700. The landlord passed away

24 and they sold the house. And the new landlord from

25 \$700. I'm paying \$2,000. And I have to work

1

2 double shift. Double shift. I leave at six
3 o'clock in the morning and get home at 11 o'clock.

4

And hoods taking care of my
5 child. When the landlord came in there, my
6 daughter is 19 now she's in college. She cry,
7 "Mom, how are you going to do this?" It's sad.
8 I'm pleading. No one is supposed to be going
9 through this. I work and imagine I'm going to work
10 and take care of someone else laying in the bed.
11 And I leave my three girls with a babysitter.
12 Isn't it sad? Just because I have to pay that rent
13 and I don't want to see my girls then on the street
14 and homeless.

15

I am begging. Get some heart.
16 Let's get some heart. I don't want to go through.
17 It's hard on me as a parent. I don't make my kids
18 see me cry, but I cry many days. It's hard. I'm
19 begging, please. Thank you.

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
21 ma'am.

22

(Audience participation.)

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Jessica
24 Dunn?

25

MS. DUNN: Hey, everyone. My

1
2 name is Jessica and I am a proud member of the
3 Crown Heights Tenant Union and the unfortunate
4 tenant of what, like many of you experience, of a
5 shitty landlord. And yet I love my rent-stabilized
6 apartment. Every year, our neighbors stand in
7 front of this board, in front of this group of
8 literal randoms, and spill out our pain, our
9 despair. We ask them not to displace us, not to
10 displace our neighbors, the people we love.

11 We get to watch the lady with
12 a bad blowout rolling her eyes. One of the
13 monopoly men back there getting angrier and
14 angrier, one of the old white guys texting under
15 the table because apparently, our stories are too
16 boring for them. We look into their soulless eyes
17 as they decide how much our homes, our families,
18 and our peace of mind is worth. Whatever we say
19 doesn't matter to them. They understand exactly
20 what is happening to us and they do not care.

21 So I'm not here to talk to
22 them. I'm here to talk to you. This is an
23 illegitimate Body that deserves none of our
24 attention. We're here to talk to each other
25 because until we strengthen our movement, these

1

2 landlords and the puppets they put on this Board
3 are going to continue to win.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

MS. DUNN: There are more of
6 us than there are of them, and we need to be as
7 organized as they are 365 days of the year. There
8 are so many organizations in the room today, and so
9 if you are not already a part of one, the stakes
10 have never been higher.

11

CHTU and our comrades are
12 outside tabling and we are committed to building
13 the power we need to protect our buildings, our
14 blocks, and our neighborhood. This whole system --

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

16

MS. DUNN: -- needs to be
17 destroyed. Why should a bunch of random mayoral
18 appointees decide whether or not we are displaced?
19 The only way we win this fight is if we fight
20 together. And so this Saturday, the Crown Heights
21 Tenant Union will be starting to build that power
22 at the Brower Park Library from 11:00 to 5:00.
23 Join us in this fight. Fuck these guys.

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25

(Audience participation.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3

Thank you. Sarah Luzar? Thank you.

4

MS. LUZAR: Hi, everybody. My

5

name is Sarah. I am a member of Crown Heights

6

Tenant Union. I lived in Crown Heights for about

7

10 years. I am a rent-stabilized tenant. Yeah.

8

Oh wait, they're laughing at -- oh, okay. They're

9

having a conversation. I mean, I don't really care

10

about them because they don't matter, right? So

11

what I was going to say -- I was going to -- I was

12

going to say a whole lot of things. I could talk

13

about how rent is taking one out of every two

14

paychecks from me.

15

I could talk about how my

16

previous rent -- my previous apartment was not

17

rent-stabilized because they -- the Rent Guidelines

18

Board given so many increases that it got

19

deregulated, right? This is a campaign, this is a

20

system where landlords are getting bonuses and

21

bailouts constantly, constantly. And they have

22

never had any sort of accountability. Now, maybe

23

instead of -- I plan to talk about a lot of things,

24

but I want to talk about rent control from 1920,

25

right?

1

2

Sorry, I'm a dork about this.

3

In 1920, we got our first rent control in New York

4

City and it was because there were over a decade of

5

rent strikes throughout the city. They only did

6

this because they were afraid of tenants fighting

7

back and causing a ruckus and social upheaval. And

8

this might be the only thing that gets through

9

because these people are not the decision-makers.

10

Eric Adams is the decision-maker, right? And Eric

11

Adams needs to be afraid of us. He is not afraid

12

of us.

13

He cares about getting real

14

estate money. He gets -- cares about getting

15

donations to his -- he's trying to not go to jail,

16

but whatever. And rent control, the first rent

17

control, it -- a lot for increases at 25 percent,

18

but then they changed and they said if a landlord

19

wants an increase, he has to go to court and get

20

permission. He has to prove that he needs it. And

21

they said, you know, maybe an 8 percent

22

profitability, whatever.

23

This rent stabilization system

24

was designed to increase your rent with zero

25

concern for what is going on in your lives. And

1

2 there's a lot going on in all of our lives. I know
3 everybody is rent-burdened. I am, you are, every
4 person -- I work in the social safety net,
5 everybody is going through it and they do not care.
6 And that is how this system is set up. So --

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8

MS. LUZAR: -- maybe somebody
9 needs to lose their job.

10

(Applause.)

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12

Our next three speakers will be Alicia Boyd, Kathy

13

Salerno, and Julia D.

14

Alicia? Is Alicia here?

15

Alicia? Is this Alicia? Who? Alicia? No, I'm

16

sorry sir. If you haven't signed up, please make

17

sure you signed up.

18

MALE VOICE 1: Sir, hold on

19

one second. Hold one second.

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I'm sorry

21

sir, if you haven't signed up, please sign up.

22

MALE VOICE 1: All right.

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have

24

speakers who have been waiting patiently

25

MALE VOICE 1:

1

2 (Unintelligible) right now, but --

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please go
4 sign up, sir. We have --5 MALE VOICE 1: -- gentlemen
6 and ladies --7 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have
8 speakers who have been waiting patiently for their
9 opportunity to speak sir, please.

10 Alicia.

11 MALE VOICE 1: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
13 Please.14 MALE VOICE 1: We speak
15 together. Yeah, we speak together16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please,
17 thank you. Thank you.18 MS. BOYD: My name is Alicia
19 Boyd.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21 MS. BOYD: And I'm a political
22 activist in the community, born and raised in
23 Brooklyn. You know, this is a shame. We should be
24 ashamed of ourselves to have a board of people who
25 do not or are not tenants. This is a disgrace for

1

2 affordable.

3

4 They put towers in our
5 community and tell us that it's going to be
6 rent-stabilized and it's not, okay. And who's at
7 fault? Your mayor. You need to be organizing to
8 get him the fuck out. I'm sorry. Get him out.
9 Get him out. Throw his ass in the street. Just
10 like we get thrown in the street, throw his ass in
11 the street. This is it people, get him out.
12 Because he's the one who's controlling these
13 puppets. He's the one that's saying he does not
14 care about black or brown, white, black.

14

15 You know, he does not care
16 about us. He does not care about us. He uses his
17 black skin to tell us that he's not racist. He's
18 racist, okay? He knows we are suffering. They
19 seen the numbers.

19

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
21 ma'am.

21

22 MS. BOYD: We have a 94
23 percent chance of finding an apartment if we get
24 displaced. 94 percent. This is a disgrace. The
25 city is a disgrace. And these people are disgrace
and you should curse them out. Because how dare

1

2 they come into our fucking communities and tell us
3 what they're going to do to us. They get mobbed by
4 the real estate industry. They get money by the
5 real estate industry and then they come to us and
6 say -- I don't want to hear you. Fuck you.

7

(Audience participation.)

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9

All right, ma'am.

10

Kathy? Is Kathy Salerno here?

11

Thank you. Please. Thank you.

12

(Audience participation.)

13

MS. SALERNO: Don't start my

14

time yet.

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Whenever

16

you're ready.

17

MS. SALERNO: Hello, Ms.

18

Smith, Mr. Erlich, Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Davidson, Mr.

19

Mclaughlin, Mr. Apple, Mr. Soltran and Ms. Aquino.

20

I'm a full-time speed pediatric speech therapist in

21

a rent-stabilized unit. I can no longer make a

22

living as an early intervention speech therapist

23

for children in need, despite the critical need for

24

such clinicians post-COVID because of the rising

25

costs of living. Thousands of children need

1
2 intended. I hear helping and caregiving
3 professions mentioned a lot when kids say what they
4 want to be when they grow up. Respectfully, I've
5 never heard a child say they want to be a landlord
6 when they grow up. And yet, landlords must provide
7 the most important care of all safe, secure, and
8 affordable housing for a healthy and safe city. Do
9 the right thing, care for your city, and keep
10 affordable housing -- keep housing affordable in
11 New York. Don't increase the rent, please, and
12 thank you.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
15 Julia? Julia D.

16 Sir, we have a line of people
17 waiting. Julia, thank you.

18 MS. JULIA D: Hi, everyone.
19 My name is Julia. I was born and raised in the
20 Bronx and I moved to Crown Heights last July and
21 I'm a member of the Crown Heights Tenant Union. I
22 grew up in a subsidized neighborhood called the
23 Amalgamated Co-op. I grew up knowing the life me
24 and my family were able to live because my family
25 wasn't burdened by rent. It took me a very long

1

2 time to prepare the notes for my testimony today.

3

4 After several crossed-out
5 ideas of thinking about how to frame my thoughts, I
6 realized I struggled because I've been reckoning
7 with the fact that this hearing is not about being
8 heard. The testimonies from last year and the rent
9 hike that followed, show me that this hearing is a
10 checkbox. A way to claim that this is a democratic
11 process when it isn't and it was never set up to
12 be. The very premise of this Board equalizes
13 tenant's ability to survive with landlord profits.

13

14 Tenants living in
15 rent-subsidized apartments who make up nearly 30
16 percent of all New Yorkers can count -- count on
17 only two of nine members to consider their needs.
18 The structure of this board assumes the ability for
19 most -- almost a million families to survive is as
20 equal a priority as landlord's ability to turn a
21 profit.

21

22 And let's not pretend that
23 this is about struggling mom-and-pop landlords
24 either. If it were, I would expect to see this
25 administration taking a stand against corporate
landlords, they're not.

1

2

3

4

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25

According to HPD, corporate landlords own 89 percent of units in the city and are the real corporates putting mom-and-pop landlords out of business. The decisions the Rent Guidelines Board have made under Eric Adams do not reflect the everyday realities of families meeting the cost to survive. Wage increases have not kept up with the rise in rent prices. The Rent Guidelines Board structures and decisions disproportionately favor corporate landlords at the expense of tenants.

This imbalance leads to financial strain and insecurity for nearly a million working families in New York. For a truly democratic process, we need a Board that prioritizes the basic human need for housing, ensures fair representation, and addresses the real issues impacting both tenants and small land -- both tenants and working families. Housing is not a commodity.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

Our next -- thank you.

(Audience participation.)

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25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Next three speakers will be Fabiola Avelino, Natalie Nakulik, and Amy Bolton.

Is Fabiola here?

MS. FABIOLA: Here.

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you. Fabiola Avelino. Thank you.

(Audience participation.)

MS. AVELINO: Okay. Good evening. My name is Fabiola Avelino. I'm a resident of Sunset Park. I have been living in a rent-stabilized apartment for six years in -- where I have never been respected. Given that I'm paying \$1,500 in rent for a room but I'm supposed to actually be paying \$980.

(Audience participation.)

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Sir, please let her speak. Thank you. Please.

MS. AVELINO: Do you know why I pay \$1,500 instead of 980 for rent? Because I'm a victim of a landlord who sees the -- who does not see the needs that I have and that others have who are looking for a place to live but he rents the apartments at a price that he wants.

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

MS. AVELINO: And they also --

4

and he also does not do the repairs that we need.

5

As a single mother, I am the head of household and

6

I must work up to the seven days a week and or have

7

two jobs in order to be able to pay the rent.

8

That's why I am here today providing my testimony

9

and asking that you do not increase the rent.

10

Thank you for listening.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

Natalie Nakulik?

14

(Audience participation.)

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please go

16

ahead. Thank you.

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please.

18

Thank you. Go ahead.

19

MS. NAKULIK: All right --

20

It's true. It's true. So, hi, everyone -- my name

21

is --

22

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Go ahead.

23

Thank you --

24

(Audience participation.)

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Sir,

1

2 please let her speak.

3

MS. NAKULIK: All right.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

5

MS. NAKULIK: Yeah, we're all

6

-- we're all pissed. We know they're not

7

listening. We know -- all right -- we fix this by

8

having rent rollback.

9

MS. AQUINO: Indeed.

10

MS. NAKULIK: All right. Hi,

11

everyone. My name is Natalie. I'm a member --

12

proud member of the Crown Heights Tenant Union.

13

Woo. I live in a rent-stabilized apartment pretty

14

close to here. And, you know, I -- having a

15

rent-stabilized apartment has really allowed me the

16

stability to know that I can stay in this

17

neighborhood, in this city. But the stability is

18

under attack by the rent increases that are

19

proposed by this board.

20

And, you know, I think we all

21

know that it's been a business strategy of

22

landlords for decades to push out rent-regulated

23

tenants so that they can raise the rent, take the

24

apartments out of rent stabilization, you know,

25

rent them as market rate. This has been a very

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: And while

4

Amy's coming down, our next three -- our next three

5

speakers -- excuse me, will be Andrew Bodiford,

6

Doria Bolton, and Cheryl Cloud. Please go ahead.

7

Thank you.

8

MS. AMY BOLTON: Hello. Hi,

9

my name is Amy Bolton. I am a rent-stabilized

10

tenant and a tenant organizer here in Brooklyn.

11

And I currently pay more than half of my income on

12

rent. And I have a question for you all. How much

13

do you pay per, in a percentage of your income on

14

your rent, every month? How much percent? What

15

percent do you pay of your income to rent every

16

month? I can wait.

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Please,

18

continue.

19

MS. AMY BOLTON: This was a

20

question. I would like an answer.

21

(Audience participation.)

22

MS. AMY BOLTON: All we ask is

23

that we pay a reasonable percentage of our income.

24

We work really hard and we cannot afford to pay

25

more than half of our income.

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

MS. AMY BOLTON: The tenants

4

that I've helped -- that I'm working with are

5

living in buildings that have had 35-plus years

6

without having their electricity replaced. And

7

they blow sockets by plugging their AC in, okay?

8

People are living in conditions that are not

9

acceptable and they're getting charged more rent

10

because the landlord is putting in new windows that

11

are apparently supposed to be better, but in

12

reality, they're worse and they're letting in the

13

air and they're making things worse, okay? We

14

cannot afford to continue to pay more rent when our

15

income stays at the same -- fuck you.

16

(Audience participation.)

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

18

-- thank you. Andrew Bodiford? Thank you.

19

MR. BODIFORD: Hey, everyone.

20

I'm Andrew Bodiford. I'm running for New York

21

Assembly for District 50 for Williamsburg and

22

Greenpoint. But I'm here today because I'm a

23

tenant just like everyone else here. And my rent

24

is too damn high. It's too high. And I'm sick and

25

tired of it. We're sick and tired of paying half

1

2 of our money in rent every single month. And it's
3 outrageous and it's got to end.

4 And I have something to tell
5 everyone here and to the Board behind us, which is
6 that we live in what is actually the richest city
7 in the entire world. It has the highest GDP of any
8 city in the entire world. And we are being told
9 that we cannot have affordable housing. That
10 landlords have to raise the rent on ordinary
11 people, ordinary working-class people like all of
12 us here who can't afford to pay the rent. It's
13 outrageous. It's horrible. It's unsupportable.
14 It's impossible for us to continue doing this.

15 And you know what? We need
16 change because we need to -- something to change in
17 the politics to change what's happening here. Eric
18 Adams, the mayor of this lovely city. He grew up
19 like us, and I don't know why he's not fighting for
20 us, but instead fighting for landlords who frankly
21 don't need it. He is a landlord. That's the
22 reason why. That is the reason why because he is a
23 landlord. And you know what? Housing is a human
24 right and it needs to be treated as that and not as
25 an investment opportunity. Fight, fight, fight.

1

2 Housing is a human right. Fight, fight, fight.

3 Housing is a human right. Fight, fight, fight.

4 Housing is a human right.

5 (Audience participation.)

6 MR. BODIFORD: Thank you,

7 guys.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9 Daria Bolton?

10 MS. CLOUD: I'm, after Doria?

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yeah.

12 Doria Bolton, then Cheryl Cloud. And, okay. Thank

13 you.

14 MS. DORIA BOLTON: Hello, my
15 name is Doria Bolton and I am a rent-stabilized
16 tenant in East Flatbush. And I didn't prepare what
17 I was going to say to you, because I'm going to
18 speak to you from my heart in the hopes that you
19 find your heart as you vote on these guidelines. I
20 hear you. This -- this last winter -- in winter,
21 my landlord put a hole in my wall to the outside.
22 And do you know what he did? When I called him to
23 tell him that there was a hole in my wall because
24 of what he did, he yelled at me; he yelled at me.
25 He said he could enter my apartment because it was

1

2 an emergency. That is not right.

3

4 This is not right. Then do
5 you know what he did? He spilled toxic chemicals
6 in my apartment. My apartment filled with fumes.
7 I could not breathe in there. And on top of being
8 a rent-stabilized tenant, I am a New Yorker with a
9 disability. In the past four years, my disability
10 has gotten worse. I have been able to work less
11 and less for less and less money. I am thankful to
12 have an amazing spouse who can work, but I can't.
13 And because my spouse can work, I can't get on
14 disability. I can't get help for my disability.
15 So we are stuck paying half of our income in rent
16 to this shithole of an apartment. And you want to
17 raise our rents? Shame. Shame.

17

(Audience participation.)

18

19 MS. DORIA BOLTON: I'm going
20 to end this by saying (unintelligible). Tear off
21 Justice. Justice. You shall pursue. Tear of
22 Justice. Justice. You shall pursue. You're
23 welcome for my time.

23

(Audience participation.)

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ms. Cloud?

25

MS. CLOUD: Well, I want -- I

1

2 want to face the people who are here. Hey,
3 everybody, my name is Cheryl and I'm from HOPE;
4 Housing Organizes for People Empowerment. This is
5 one of the most serious housing crisis that we have
6 ever experienced in our lifetime. Especially, in
7 the advent of COVID, et cetera, et cetera, and the
8 economic shutdown.

9 In 2023, the number of
10 homeless was 88,026 in New York City. And in 2024,
11 the number of homeless is 145,567 in New York City.
12 Furthermore, the number of evictions in 2023 were
13 12,641. And the -- and the current number of
14 evictions of people in New York City is -- I am
15 sorry -- 14,207 and counting.

16 The current number of that --
17 of vacancies in 2024 are 42,860. Why are all these
18 people in shelters? And the median rent in New
19 York City, as I am speaking right now, is \$3,290.
20 As you can see, the housing crisis has not -- has
21 not -- not only worsened, but it has deteriorated
22 due to our politicians and -- and the like, okay?

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
24 ma'am.

25 MS. CLOUD: If the rents in

1

2 New York City keep escalating out of control with
3 no end in sight, is anybody going to be able to
4 live in New York City? All right.

5

(Audience participation.)

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
7 ma'am. Thank you.

8

MS. CLOUD: We all need to
9 show some humanity, some humanity for the people.
10 Put yourselves in their position.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

13

MS. CLOUD: If it was
14 happening to you, you would want some humanity
15 shown to you and some justice for the people.

16

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

17

MS. CLOUD: And what we want
18 is a rent rollback.

19

(Audience participation.)

20

MS. CLOUD: And how the hell
21 can you people sleep at night? How can you sleep
22 at night knowing that you're doing the people in?

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
24 ma'am.

25

MS. CLOUD: Think about what

1

2 I'm saying to you. Do the right thing.

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4 (Audience participation.)

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6 Our next three speakers -- thank you. Our next
7 three speakers are Renato Bradley, Viola Vivins,
8 and Judith Douglas.

9 MS. BRADLEY: Unlike my
10 colleagues, I'm not going to turn my back on you.
11 But I'm going to talk to you. As a woman with
12 children, you shouldn't want to go up on our rent.
13 You should see, you should understand our story.
14 As that landlord stood here and told you all about
15 the bricks that was falling outside his house.
16 What about the water that's running down in my
17 basement in my apartment? What about the ceiling
18 that's falling down in people bathrooms? It's not
19 that we don't want to pay our rent, we can't afford
20 to pay our rent.

21 You all keep going up on the
22 rent more and more and more and more. When you all
23 going to give us a break? When you all going to
24 give us a break? You all see these senior citizens
25 in here? They got to pay for medicine. You got to

1

2 pay light, you got to pay gas, you got to pay
3 cable. People got to pay for their kids to be
4 taken care of -- and what about food? We can't do
5 that -- because our rent is too damn high.

6 The lady told you all about
7 Urban Strategy. I know Urban Strategy firsthand.
8 My sister live in an urban strategy building. For
9 six years my sister been asking them to fix this
10 hole in her ceiling, in her bathroom. My sister
11 have a son that has traumatic brain injury. He had
12 my sister have to make sure she's in the bathroom
13 with him so the ceiling don't fall out on his head.
14 My sister had to threaten them to call the firemen
15 for them to come put a lock on her door. But every
16 month like clockwork, they want the rent.

17 Last year you all went up on
18 the rent. This year you all shaking your heads and
19 you all saying, okay, but what we saying don't mean
20 a damn thing to you. You go go home tonight and
21 you go to try to sleep well while we go home and
22 worry about how the hell we going to live. If the
23 government -- I listen to the news, don't thank me,
24 don't rush me because this is my time. Because
25 this is my life and this is where I live. And I

1

2 work very hard to pay my rent, okay?

3

4 Not only that, could you
5 imagine being a rich, stabilized person on Section
6 Eight? That's the worst. Because when the
7 landlord was telling you all about the bricks
8 falling out, the thing he didn't tell you all, you
9 all going to raise our rent.

9

10 And he go get MCI (sic) for
11 that too. So as you all raise the rent and he get
12 \$600 more rent, we still paying for his bricks.
13 When are we going to get a break? We're walking
14 around in clothes with holes in them. Because we
15 can't afford nothing else. We're walking around
16 with slippers because we can't afford. Come on
17 now. It's time for this shit to stop. It's time.

17

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

18

19 MS. BRADLEY: And you as a
20 woman, you should say, "yes."

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

21

22 MS. BRADLEY: No, she can't.
23 She can't, but it's all right. No, don't rush me.
24 I said.

24

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am, we
have a number of speakers.

1

2

MS. BRADLEY: No, I don't

3

care.

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I

5

understand that ma'am --

6

MS. BRADLEY: It's --

7

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have a

8

number of speakers.

9

MS. BRADLEY: I'm going to say

10

what I have to say.

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

12

ma'am.

13

MS. BRADLEY: I'm going to say

14

what I have to say. Because we come here year

15

after year crying and begging and pleading when

16

it's us that carried this damn city on our backs.

17

It's us that works in you all fast food

18

restaurants. It's us that's picking up the shit.

19

But you all don't care. Because you all just want

20

to say okay, you just want to say thank you. That

21

I'm taking somebody time. But that somebody time

22

I'm taking is down with me. So she don't care.

23

(Audience participation.)

24

MS. BRADLEY: If I take her

25

time because she still going to come, and she still

1

2 going to speak. And we still got to say what we
3 got to say because I came here for business --

4

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am --

5

6 MS. BRADLEY: I didn't come
7 here for the BS. I ain't come here to hear that
8 you all did last time. We walked out the door and
9 you all still talking about you all going up on the
10 rent. And yeah, we hear the mayor talking about 6
11 percent ain't right. All he want to say is he's
12 sexy. It ain't sexy. It ain't sexy that you
13 evicting us. If you go up -- If you go up one red
14 penny, if you go up one red penny or most of these
15 people rent in here. We going to be evicted.
16 Where can we come live with you? Can we come live
17 with you?

17

(Audience participation.)

18

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have a
20 number of speakers this evening. I know you have
21 much to say.

21

22 MS. BRADLEY: We can go eat
23 with Ms. Genesis. We can go eat below our
24 (unintelligible) but they ain't got enough room for
25 us neither. So can we come live with you all?
Because I need a place to go. Because I don't know

1

2 no place. I don't know no place for Brooklyn.

3 I've lived in Brooklyn all my life. Where am I
4 going to go? Tell me.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am, are
6 you done? Thank you.

7 MS. BRADLEY: The rent is too
8 damn high.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I
10 appreciate that. Thank you, ma'am.

11 MS. BRADLEY: If you not give
12 us a rent rollback or you don't give us zero rent
13 heights --

14 MS. SMYTH: Tell her to
15 respect the process.

16 MS. BRADLEY: -- because
17 little Kingston --

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am, we
19 have a number of speakers. I know understand,
20 ma'am. But we do have a number of speakers.

21 MS. BRADLEY: They got a 15
22 percent rent rollback.

23 (Audience participation.)

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
25 ma'am. Thank you. Our next speaker -- our next

1

2 speaker is Viola. Is Viola Vivins here? Viola

3 Vivins. Viola Vivins. All right, thank you.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6 We would like to hear from our next speaker Viola

7 -- Thank you. Please, ma'am. Thank you. Thank

8 you, ma'am. Viola, thank you.

9

MS. VIVINS: Okay. Hello,

10 everyone. Good evening. My name is Viola Vivins

11 Stryker. I had to get married a second time

12 because I couldn't afford the rent. I just want to

13 say that I'm from the Caribbean and I've been

14 living in Brooklyn in that same apartment for 47

15 years. The land -- I used to be so scared of the

16 landlord because he treated me like shit.

17

He would I -- if I plugged

18 anything in, the lights would go off. I had to go

19 downstairs, come back upstairs. My kids would hang

20 out the window and say, "Mommy, it's on." And then

21 I come back upstairs again. This is how he treated

22 me. And he made you all stinking rich. He made

23 you all stinking rich. Do you all ever donate

24 money to the homeless mental health people? People

25 out there with mental health problems, sleeping on

1

2 sidewalks. Do you all ever go see them? You all
3 ever see the mental health people? They after --
4 they made you so rich that my landlord is dead now
5 just like everybody else. We all are going to die
6 and leave whatever money that we have. So all the
7 money that you're gorging from us for rent, for
8 rent, for rent, for rent, you all are going to die
9 and leave that damn money.

10 (Audience participation.)

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
12 ma'am. Thank you. Our next three speakers will be
13 Judith Douglas. Judith Douglas -- and then Ronald
14 Seffler, and Shawnee Casuli. Thank you.

15 MS. DOUGLAS: Good afternoon,
16 everyone? Good afternoon, congregation? So today
17 I'm here to support all the other tenants regarding
18 the high rent. We all work hard. We know what
19 that feel like. We come from generation to
20 generation.

21 So my name is Judith Douglas
22 and I'm a tenant of a rent-stabilized building in
23 Brooklyn at 249 East 37th Street. I know you are
24 representing the landlord but you also have a heart
25 and you have to really go deep within yourself to

1
2 understand our pain and our living situation
3 because we are living it. You-- your situation
4 might be different. You might have your luxury
5 apartment, one of those Trump building, I don't
6 know. But we don't have that luxury. We open our
7 door on our own. We don't have nobody to do it for
8 us. You guys salary, probably much better than
9 ours. So you can't afford those kind of luxury
10 life.

11 But we are talking about race
12 situation. If you have never been through it.
13 Each year we come to this panel and my members, if
14 I'm not here, to discuss this rent increase. It's
15 like a journey in life that none of us should be
16 doing every year -- we have passed through a
17 pandemic. We see how many people pass on. They
18 have money, but they couldn't save themselves.
19 Okay. It is no -- they may not even get into the
20 Polly Gates because money doesn't really -- nothing
21 up there.

22 You understand? Some of -- so
23 many of us are lucky to survive and we are here and
24 we are here to tell our story. No one should be
25 working three, four, and five jobs to survive.

1

2 When you rent an apartment, it's a contract. And
3 every time you, you renew a lease, that contract is
4 renewed. And when the contract is renewed, it is
5 the landlord responsibility to make sure --

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

8 MS. DOUGLAS: -- everything in
9 that apartment is upkeep. Every tenant has a right
10 to live in a peaceful, quiet environment --

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
12 ma'am.

13 MS. DOUGLAS: -- free from --
14 free from noise. Free from Pets. Free from rodent
15 and mice.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes.
17 Thank you, ma'am. Thank you.

18 MS. DOUGLASS: Free from
19 people coming in the building. Just because there
20 is -- there is no proper lock on the door. You
21 understand me?

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes.
23 Thank you, ma'am.

24 MS. DOUGLAS: Because we don't
25 have family in the building --

1

2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I

3

understand.

4

MS. DOUGLAS: -- all of us.

5

We have that security blanket.

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7

MS. DOUGLAS: We need to feel

8

safe and when you have buildings that don't protect

9

the tenants, but every year they put you into a

10

contract. It's not fair. And a lot of times --

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Ma'am, we

12

have a number of speakers. Thank you, ma'am.

13

MS. DOUGLAS: -- the contract

14

that they put -- put you into -- the contract that

15

they put you into is not like you want to sign it,

16

but they forced you to sign it. And it's not fair.

17

If you have an apartment and you are working with

18

the city, the city should take measures to make

19

sure those apartments are always upkeep. But the

20

city also --

21

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

22

MS. DOUGLAS: -- failing us

23

too.

24

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

25

MS. DOUGLAS: Okay?

1

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

3 MS. DOUGLAS: The landlord get
4 a 421 tax break. For how many years? How many
5 years? 50, 25, 30 years. We get nothing; okay.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
7 --

8 MS. DOUGLAS: They own the
9 Stock Market. We are not. Huh? They're sending
10 people to do the work. Look, recently they sent
11 someone to do some work in my kitchen. The guy did
12 the work. He put on brand-new tiles, but the floor
13 was sinking. He covered up with the tiles. When
14 he did that, few months -- few weeks after, the
15 floor was sinking again. They came back and they
16 ripped up the entire floor. They put down piece of
17 sheet -- piece of water. And they put some new
18 tiles. You know what happened again?

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have a
20 number of speakers. Please --

21 MS. DOUGLAS: The tiles coming
22 up --

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: -- try to
24 bring your testimony to a close. Thank you.

25 MS. DOUGLASS: Guys look at

1

2 everything that we are going through. We cannot --

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4 MS. DOUGLAS: -- be just

5 working for rent. We need, we --

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

7 --

8 MS. DOUGLAS: -- need, we need

9 some kind of compromisation. We need to freeze the

10 rent for five years. The landlord is already

11 making money.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

13 ma'am. Thank you.

14 (Audience participation.)

15 MS. DOUGLAS: We have family

16 to feed, so we need rent rollback.

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

18 ma'am.

19 MS. DOUGLAS: Rent rollback is

20 the only thing that we can survive on right now.

21 And if you guys have a heart and a soul, you can

22 dig deep and ready. Make it work for us --

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

24 MS. DOUGLAS: -- because we

25 all are human being and in the end of the day we

1

2 are going six feet down.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

6

Ronald. Ronald Seffler, please.

7

(Audience participation.)

8

MR. SEFFLER: My name is Ronald

9

Seffler.

10

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

11

MR. SEFFLER: I live 1402

12

Southern Place(sic) for my 15 years, have a lot of

13

problem in my apartment. I went to the court,

14

judge gave me other two (unintelligible). They

15

don't care about me. Now God, send hope. Now help

16

me.

17

Sir, I have a cabinet more

18

than 20 years that have mold. I have four

19

children. I still -- I complain. I call the

20

landlords. I see the feces in my bathroom. He

21

came, he sent big picture. It never come back or

22

the ceiling fell in my head. Not fair.

23

And then if you see now my

24

cabinet seal more than 20 years is the door can

25

open a mold seal inside. I have still a leaking.

1

2 No stove. Not fair. Please. We need justice.

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

4 MR. SEFFLER: We need talk to
5 give me justice. Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

8 Our next three speakers will be Shawnee Casuli,
9 Monica Walker, and Scott Hutchins.

10 Shawnee Casuli. Thank you.

11 MS. CASULI: Sure. My name is

12 Shawnee. Oh, yeah, I'll talk to you guys. Hey
13 you, all? Hi? Hi, guys? My name is Shawnee and
14 I've been a tenant my whole life. I was raised in
15 a small apartment building and once the landlord
16 wasn't able to keep the building, it got passed off
17 to some randoms. And slowly but surely, the lack
18 of repairs led to total destruction of the
19 apartment. Water damage coming from the radiator
20 literally caused the walls to start peeling. It
21 was like the apartment was melting. It was insane.

22 Currently, I live in Ocean
23 Hill and I like my neighborhood. I'm part of the
24 community garden over there. I'm very close to the
25 train. I want to stay where I'm at. But no matter

1
2 what living situation I have, there's always a
3 fucking problem. There's always a fucking problem.
4 It doesn't matter what building I'm in, it doesn't
5 matter what neighborhood I'm in. Every time I'm in
6 an apartment building where we have some slumlord,
7 getting rich off of the rent that I'm paying.
8 Working three jobs to pay. Working three jobs, on
9 top of that, volunteering on the weekend just so I
10 can have food in my fucking kitchen. It's
11 ridiculous. It's ridiculous how much effort we
12 have to put into maintaining shelter. It's
13 ridiculous how precarious these situations are.
14 It's ridiculous how rich you can get by having
15 subs, owning substandard housing for umpteen amount
16 of people. It's ridiculous that no matter how bad
17 it gets, this Board decides per rent increases.

18 In perpetuity is the only
19 thing that makes sense. To make things better. It
20 doesn't make it better. We know that. They know
21 that. And at this point, they know that. We know
22 that. It's like a fucking insidious dance that we
23 are doing, where we are trying to prove that this
24 doesn't work. And they're saying, "Oh, but in
25 order to make things work, we got to keep raising

1

2 it around. It's insidious. It's insidious.

3

4 You think you'll be protected
5 when there's rivers of homeless people where
6 everything is in destruction. You think that
7 you're going to live peaceful lives. You think
8 your Ivory Tower is so far away. I hope --

8

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
ma'am.

10

11

12

13

14

15

MS. CASULI: -- you struggle
to sleep. I hope you struggle to sleep. I hope
you have low self-esteem. I hope your children
think you all frauds. I hope you have terrible
relationships. I hope you have any -- a modicum of
the problems --

16

17

18

19

20

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

MS. CASULI: -- your board
inflicts on the everyday working-class tenant.

21

22

MS. CASULI: Fuck you very
much.

23

(Audience participation.)

24

25

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Monica
Williams? Is Monica Williams here? Is Monica

1

2 Williams here? Thank you.

3

MS. WILLIAMS: My name Monisa,
4 not Monica Williams. Oh, yeah, they're not,
5 they're -- maybe those two but them, because that's
6 not even a board member and the other two not here.
7 It's supposed to be nine board members in. Two of
8 them don't give a fuck to come to this vote. Two
9 of them don't give a fuck because who the fuck is
10 that? But -- right? He was there, now he's there.
11 But I lived in Brooklyn all my life; right?

12

So I want you all to know that
13 I lived in this building for almost 11 years. The
14 landlord does not fix anything. Not a thing. Like
15 it is so horrible. I live with roaches, rats,
16 mites. I still live with these problems as a
17 tenant organizer in a tenant in Brooklyn. You
18 don't care, stop shaking your hand. But -- so I
19 lived with mom for very long and I also -- he
20 never, like, cleaned the hallway. So think about
21 it.

22

COVID happened and everything
23 is supposed to be clean daily. He never cleaned
24 the hallway. He never gave us a safe escape from
25 this disease that was out here. Also, it's like --

1
2 as well as tenant is paying their rents and they're
3 trying to increase, like they did last year. They
4 sat up there, they said they was going to increase
5 the rent and they lied just as these. The same
6 motherfucker that lied last year. They the same
7 motherfucker that decreased, they decision to
8 fucking let the rent be increased because they
9 can't fight all of them by themselves. They can't
10 do it. You all are shitty. But I don't; right?

11 So I don't think that I should
12 be paying an increase of rent if my neighborhood in
13 Bronxville have never upgraded since I've been
14 living there. I live in shambles. We have cops
15 everywhere.

16 It is crime everywhere. But
17 they're raising the rent across the Detroit State
18 area. It doesn't matter, right? It doesn't
19 matter. So it feel like I'm battling a losing
20 battle. I -- I'm a tenant organizer and I could
21 barely pay my fucking rent. And they're about to
22 increase it right now, right?

23 So I had this speech -- I had
24 to forget what I had on this paper. Because it
25 don't even make sense. Because it's not like

1
2 they're going to listen anyway. It is not like
3 they're going to care, anyway. All I can say is,
4 you know what? You could tell your friend Matt
5 Adams "fuck him." Because that -- because I know
6 he's close friend with you. You could tell him
7 "fuck you" and you fuck you guys. Because you guys
8 don't give a fuck about nobody. Only those two
9 tenant members actually cleared. And last year you
10 didn't even give him a fucking decision to speak.
11 He's going to say shit.

12 (Audience participation.)

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next
14 three speakers are Scott Hutchins, JD Morales, and
15 Deborah Fuchang.

16 Scott Hutchins?

17 MR. HUTCHINS: This -- thank
18 you. My name is Scott Hutchins. I moved here 20
19 years ago to earn a master's degree from the
20 College of Staten Island. I have a master's
21 degree. 2012 I became homeless. Yeah. With a
22 master's degree, I became homeless. Spent eight
23 years in the Friendship Shelter system. Now I'm
24 living in an apartment on City Phipps. And of
25 course that gets affected. It's considered

1

2 rent-stabilized because it's 421A.

3

4 And so the rent keeps getting
5 raised every year, even though I was homeless. So
6 it's basically leeching off the taxpayers because
7 it's through city theft. So the city's paying for
8 my most of my rent, not all of it.

8

9 So you know how much it would
10 cost for me to live in this apartment. \$72,000.
11 It's tiny. I was evicted from an apartment in the
12 Bronx that was bigger. I mean, this does have
13 built-in air conditioners. But the air
14 conditioners leaked and destroyed a bunch of my
15 books. There are roaches. And this place was only
16 built in 2018. There shouldn't be any of that
17 crap. They -- the place gets -- summons us all the
18 time because they're not putting the garbage out
19 properly. So you people have millions of dollars
20 to lobby and put these stupid damn public service
21 announcements. Say, how you need more money. You
22 don't need more money. If you can afford to make
23 this TV advertising to tell people that you need to
24 raise rent, stabilize people's rent. You don't
25 need the money.

25

And so you may know, I used to

1
2 run for Offices of Green. You can't do that
3 anymore. Because these fucking tyrants up in
4 Albany decided to make it much harder for regular
5 people to run. There's no way to get on a fricking
6 ballot unless you can hire people to go get
7 signatures for you because they raised the
8 signature count. So nobody who's a real person,
9 who's not some wealthy billionaire can run for
10 office anymore. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

12 (Audience participation.)

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: JD
14 Morales. Is JD Morales here? Deborah Fuchang?
15 Deborah? Thank you.

16 MS. FUCHANG: Hi, everyone.
17 It's my first time at one of these things and I'm
18 not sure what you do. So I'm here to ask some
19 questions. You're -- you're supposed to be
20 deciding on this amount of the rent increase.
21 That's what you do. And the Board -- this is a
22 Board that decides on this and it may, it's
23 consists of, could you just help me with this? Who
24 is represented? What percentage? I don't know and
25 I don't understand.

1
2 Could you tell me -- well,
3 could you tell me who you are? Everyone comes
4 here. Oh, I guess I should say who I am. Well, my
5 name is Deborah Fuchang. I lived in Crown Heights
6 for nearly 40 years in two different apartment
7 buildings. I currently live on Washington Avenue.
8 I love where I live. My husband and I stayed
9 there. It's over 25 years. Just over 25 years
10 we've been there.

11 There's been a lot of
12 shifting, but we've had to put up, like with most
13 of what everyone else said here. I agree with it.
14 And lately, it's increased more. All the services
15 or lack thereof that everyone has been complaining
16 about. We have experience in it, and now we are
17 experiencing it even more. So as we get older and
18 we move into this age, I am 65 years old. I just
19 turned 65 years old. I am not able to get the work
20 that I used to do anymore. And these are the
21 things that are happening.

22 But I'm asking you this
23 question because I really need to know what this
24 Board -- what's the name of the board: what does
25 it -- what is -- what do you do and what's the

1

2 basis upon which you increase the rent? You know,
3 I'm not getting any response from you, but I was
4 told that this is a forum where you can come and
5 ask the question, but I don't hear any comments
6 except from you. And I need to know what is the
7 basis on which you increase the rent?

8 No, please, please. I just --
9 I need to know this. Please, can somebody just
10 tell me what is going on?

11 How do you -- how do you
12 decide on what to increase? How do you come to
13 that conclusion? How do you do it?

14 MR. SOLTREN: So this is a New
15 York City Rent Guidelines Board. It's comprised of
16 nine members, all appointed by the mayor.

17 MS. FUCHANG: Mm-hmm
18 (affirmative.)

19 MR. SOLTREN: And it's
20 supposed to set rental adjustments, not necessarily
21 increases, although it seems like every year that
22 the rent does increase. And it -- it's because the
23 Board looks at a bunch of data and over the years
24 they wind up rent increasing rents more times than
25 not. And so that's why we are here. There's a

1

2 series of hearings to then vote on an increase.

3

4 They've already decided that
5 they're going to increase your rent at least 2
6 percent because of the preliminary vote that
7 occurred back in May. And so there will be a final
8 vote on that number in -- on June 17th. And so,
9 just to answer your question, that is why we're
here.

10

MS. FUCHANG: So --

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

12

Adán.

13

14 MS. FUCHANG: Thank you. But
15 -- so -- but the increases are supposed to be based
16 on something. We are in a -- we are at a time
17 right now where people are not able to work
18 anymore. They've lose -- a lot of the jobs that we
19 did are now gone. Some of them have gone remote
20 and they've just gone away because of how things
21 have changed. You know that, I don't need to tell
you that.

22

23 But the basis on which you
24 increase the rent, there must be some basis because
25 I am aware that all these landlords have been
getting certain benefits throughout the COVID that

1

2 the tenants were not able -- that the tenants were
3 not privy to or did not get tax credit. Whatever
4 it is, you call it. But also to -- this is a time
5 when --

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

8 MS. FUCHANG: -- the economy
9 is really -- it's just difficult. This is what it
10 is. It's what's going on right now. Inflation is
11 high. Even for those of us who were looking to
12 move out, like us, to move into our own homes.
13 It's difficult because of the increases in the
14 interest rate and the real -- the -- the prices of
15 that. It's something --

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
17 ma'am.

18 MS. FUCHANG: -- that's not
19 going to happen. So I don't understand. I still
20 don't understand why you would want to increase. I
21 -- why you would want to be increasing it at a time
22 when things are so difficult for people --

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I
24 appreciate that, ma'am. Thank you.

25 MS. FUCHANG: -- it's very

1

2 difficult for us right now. Everyone in here that
3 is speaking, I hear everyone voice. And I hear
4 it's what's happening to us at the time down to the
5 ridiculous. I know you're not here to listen to
6 what's going on in people's apartment individually.

7 So this is why I came with the
8 question, what's the basis on which you -- how you
9 decide that? How do you decide what to increase
10 the rent by? And I keep saying increase, this
11 young man corrected me because that's all it's been
12 over the years. And there is nothing that comes
13 back to the tenant. Even though we are living in
14 these conditions and continue to live in these
15 conditions --

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
17 ma'am.

18 MS. FUCHANG: -- under reduced
19 income.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
21 --

22 MS. FUCHANG: And I'm not
23 using the COVID as an excuse, as most people have
24 been using the government and everyone else is
25 using COVID and as excuse as an excuse. But COVID

1

2 did come about. However, it did come about. It's
3 very questionable about this. But, you know, did
4 COVID came and now we have the effect of COVID that
5 is affecting all of us.

6 And right in the middle of
7 that, they -- the rent has increased the last two
8 years since that it is something that was totally
9 unexpected. I don't -- I need to understand. How
10 do you decide on that? What --

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
12 ma'am.

13 MS. FUCHANG: -- you do?

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
15 ma'am.

16 MS. FUCHANG: I need an
17 answer. Please, can you tell me something? Can
18 anybody tell me something how you decide on that?
19 Are you not allowed to answer questions?

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.
21 I'm happy to speak later. But, ma'am, we -- thank
22 you ma'am.

23 MS. FUCHANG: So --

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
25 ma'am.

1

2

MS. FUCHANG: So no, no, no.

3

Because I want to know, you know. How do you

4

decide on it? You did not even answer on the --

5

the composition of the Board --

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

7

ma'am.

8

MS. FUCHANG: You know -- I

9

know this -- I heard this young lady here said that

10

she was the only tenant representative or something

11

to that. But I don't understand. And I --

12

MS. SMYTH: The Board has a

13

website, ma'am. The Board has a website also that

14

you could consult. But I'm also happy to speak to

15

you after -- to comprise the Board. But this

16

beeping is a timer and each person --

17

MS. FUCHANG: I --

18

(Audience participation.)

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

20

ma'am. Thank you. Appreciated.

21

MS. FUCHANG: I understand I'm

22

not --

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We can get

24

you more information, ma'am. Thank you --

25

MS. FUCHANG: So --

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2

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: -- but

3

this is not the forum for that. Thank you ma'am --

4

MS. FUCHANG: So I cannot get

5

any --

6

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

7

MS. FUCHANG: And I will --

8

you will not be able to answer any of my questions.

9

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We can get

10

you more information, ma'am. Thank you.

11

MS. SMYTH: We can certainly

12

get you information --

13

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We can get

14

you more information, ma'am.

15

MS. FUCHANG: Yeah. Point --

16

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

17

ma'am.

18

MS. FUCHANG: Point --

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

20

ma'am. Thank you.

21

MS. FUCHANG: I -- okay. Just

22

one last question --

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes,

24

ma'am.

25

MS. FUCHANG: -- before I

1

2 leave, I don't --

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,

4

ma'am.

5

MS. FUCHANG: -- understand

6

what is the purpose of the meeting? What are you,

7

why are you here?

8

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: You're

9

here ma'am -- to hear from you.

10

MS. FUCHANG: To hear from us.

11

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: To hear

12

from you. Yes --

13

MS. FUCHANG: So -- yes, but

14

-- so to hear from us --

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes, ma'am

16

--

17

MS. FUCHANG: -- but not to

18

answer questions.

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: That's

20

correct, Ma'am.

21

MS. FUCHANG: You are not

22

allowed to answer questions.

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We have a

24

number of speakers we wanted to hear from and we

25

want to make sure that we do.

1

2 MS. FUCHANG: No, I understand
3 that. But the question --

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

6 MS. FUCHANG: -- means you
7 can't answer any questions.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
9 ma'am. I'm -- we're happy to give you more
10 information after the meeting --

11 MS. FUCHANG: All right? Is
12 there--

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
14 ma'am.

15 MS. FUCHANG: -- is there
16 someplace that I can submit my questions to you?

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Yes,
18 absolutely. Through the -- we'll to come talk to
19 you. As soon as the hearing is over, we'll give
20 you the information.

21 MS. FUCHANG: Oh, you're going
22 to talk to me afterwards?

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON:
24 Absolutely. We're happy to give you --

25 MS. FUCHANG: Okay.

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CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: -- where you can submit your questions. Thank you. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you.

MS. FUCHANG: All right.

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Our next speaker --

MS. FUCHANG: All right.

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. FUCHANG: I am disappointed because I haven't gotten any question and I hope--

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. FUCHANG: -- that you will answer after.

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you, ma'am. Our next speaker is Mildred Walters, Mildred? Mildred Walters.

(Audience participation.)

MS. WALTERS: I don't know if I have anything to say based on what everybody else has said tonight because it's the same thing. I'm coming up here to say all over the lady asked

1

2 question and she don't get any answers. So where
3 do we go, and where are we going? You know, and
4 it's not everybody can read website. This is what
5 she's asking. You are going to raise the rent. So
6 there must be a motive. Yes, there's a motive to
7 put money in your pocket. But also we want to know
8 what are the criteria for you to raise the rent?
9 What are you raising the rent for?

10

I was at my apartment. I
11 stayed there for 20 year -- 40 years. And you know
12 what sister, dear, I'm calling everybody sister and
13 brother, dear though. You know what happened. I
14 have to fix my apartment every year. Everything
15 happened in there. I have to fix this. I pay
16 money to fix it because I told you guys already
17 that one of the landlord came into the apartment
18 before Chestnut and said they like to rent their
19 the West Indians their apartment because West
20 Indians work and they can't fix apartment.

21

And I did that because I
22 thought that was the best thing I know until hope
23 come in. If HOPE never come in, I would not know
24 that I did not have to fix my whole apartment. I
25 have to map the floor. I have to -- I am kill

1

2 rats. I make up concussion for rats. I make rat
3 poison for the whole building. 1408 and 1402. And
4 I get my -- the tenants in 1408, 1402 to fix their
5 apartment. We used to pay people's husbands who
6 work and we know no little thing to how to fix it.
7 And we fix those two apartment.

8 We are taking those two
9 apartment from when we used to pick down in other
10 people apartments, seeing they're having good sex.
11 And we used to be there watching them downstairs.
12 And we've fixed those apartments until the
13 apartment reached to the point now that they are
14 telling us.

15 We said, no, sir, who put in
16 and said, we don't have to fix the apartment. You
17 know what we have to do? Now they said the thing
18 that they're saying to us now. We started to hold
19 our rent. Rent strike and we really work with it.
20 Come on man. Come on --

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you

22 --

23 MS. WALTERS: -- come on.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
25 ma'am.

1

2

MS. WALTERS: Hey, nobody

3

going to stop me because for 40 years my mouth was

4

closed. 40 years. I see they put tenants out. 40

5

years I watch people run with baby and everything

6

thrown out on the street. 40 years I saw people

7

climbing up on fire escape with a lock on it. I've

8

seen 40 years people living on the rooftop. 40

9

years I've seen it all.

10

We've fixed our apartment. We

11

fixed still our apartment. And now you know what

12

they're saying to us? You know what they're saying

13

to us? When they came in my apartment two weeks

14

ago, he said, you have a very nice apartment. I

15

said, I fix it. But they were collecting the rent

16

all these years because, you know, I could not stay

17

in there without paying the rent. I fixed it

18

because you know what else I'm going to do? I want

19

to live there. I'm human being. I want to live

20

like human. We sweep or we clean place. We come

21

from the West Indian. We like our place to be

22

clean and live like human. Yes, we do it.

23

I'm speaking for myself, but

24

speaking for most of the people on the thing. So

25

it's time for us now since we have something since

1

2 we understand that we have hope, we have other
3 organizations and a thing like that. We ain't
4 giving them one more inch of our time.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you
6 --

7 MS. WALTERS: This is --

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

9 MS. WALTERS: -- the last year
10 we giving them this time. We are not giving them
11 no more. We're going to do it ourselves. We have
12 a voice. So we have to get together, right? We
13 have to get together. They ain't here. That's not
14 bothering them.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

16 MS. WALTERS: They don't pay
17 that no mine better. You understand me before. So
18 we say --

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
20 ma'am. Thank you.

21 MS. WALTERS: -- you
22 understand me? So we not going but don't thank me
23 because I know you don't thank me. I know you
24 don't thank me.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I do,

1

2 ma'am. Thank you.

3

MS. WALTERS: That's sarcasm.

4

And don't believe that --

5

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: It's not

6

sarcasm, ma'am.

7

MS. WALTERS: -- we're stupid.

8

We're not stupid. The only thing that we're

9

bailing out, we're bailing out and saying, we are

10

not going to let no more landlord take us for

11

idiot. That's what we call it. Idiot. No more

12

landlord going to take us for idiot. We're going

13

to stand up, man. We're going to fight. Come on

14

brethren. Fight. Come on brethren.

15

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

16

MS. WALTERS: We fighting. We

17

fighting. And --

18

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you.

19

MS. WALTERS: -- we must

20

increase. Rent rollback man. Rent rollback. When

21

we be -- Come on, come on, come on. We have a

22

voice. We have a voice. We have a voice. We have

23

a voice. We have a voice. Don't let nobody thank

24

you. They thanking you for the dollars that you

25

pay them. We are not Egypt. We stupid. They're

1

2 Us? With my duct.

3

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Thank you,
4 ma'am. Thank you, thank you,

5

MS. WALTERS: And every time
6 you say thank you, I want to hold the mic more.
7 Because the sarcasm; sarcasm and stupidity think
8 us like we are idiot. So come on man, we have to
9 do something better. You sit there and talking
10 about your family member is there not getting any
11 food? You can't even eat food. You know how many
12 times? You know how many times I have -- I make a
13 choice over my medication and paying the rent? You
14 know how many times, huh? Come on, man. Come on.
15 So what are we going to do? What are we going to
16 do? What are we going to do? Rent rollback. Rent
17 rollback. Come on, man. Come on, man. Come on.

18

(Audience participation.)

19

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: I want to
20 thank everyone for being here tonight. Do I have a
21 motion to adjourn?

22

MR. EHRLICH: Motion?

23

CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: Do I have
24 a second?

25

MR. APPLE: Second.

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CHAIRMAN DAVIDSON: We're
adjourned.

(Audience participation.)

(At 8:00 P.M., the proceedings
were concluded.)

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

I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public within and
for the State of New York, do hereby certify that
the foregoing pages 1 through 187, taken at the
time and place aforesaid, is a true and correct
transcription of the teleconference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my name this 20th day of June, 2024.

Marc Russo

MARC RUSSO

Concordance

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