

1

2 THE CITY OF NEW YORK

3 RENT GUIDELINES BOARD

4 -----X

5 PUBLIC MEETING

6 OF THE

7 DIRECTORS

8 -----X

9 Location: Jamaica Performing

10 Arts Center

11 Auditorium

12 153-10 Jamaica Avenue

13 Jamaica, NY 11432

14 Thursday, June 5, 2025

15 5:00 a.m.

16

17

18 B E F O R E:

19

20 DOUG APPLE,

21 THE CHAIR

22

23

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2     A P P E A R A N C E S:

3     Board of Directors:

4     Doug Apple, Chair

5     Arpit Gupta

6     Alex Schwartz

7     Christina Smyth

8     Robert Ehrlich

9     Genesis Aquino

10    Adan Soltren

11    Reed Jordan

12    Alexander Armlovich

13

14

15    S T A F F:

16    Andrew McLaughlin - Executive Director

17    Brian Hoberman - Co-Research Director

18    Danielle Burger - Co-Research Director

19    Charmaine Superville - Office Manager

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25    \_\_\_\_\_ P R O C E E D I N G S

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: All right. Good evening. We're going to get started now. I'd like to welcome you to this public hearing of the New York City Rent Guidelines Board, and thank you for attending.

This is the first of five public hearings to consider comments concerning proposed rent adjustments for leases, for apartments, lofts, hotels, and other housing units subject to the Rent Stabilization Law of 1969 and the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974. These adjustments will affect leases commencing between October 1, 2025, to September 30th, 2026.

I will now take roll call. Please respond if present. Genesis Aquino?

MS. AQUINO: Present.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Alec Armlovich.

MR. ARMLOVICH: Present.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Robert Ehrlich.

MR. EHRLICH: Present.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Arpit Gupta.

MR. GUPTA: Present.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Reed Jordan.

MR. JORDAN: Present.

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Alex Schwartz.

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MR. SCHWARTZ: Present.

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Christina Smyth.

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MS. SMYTH: Present.

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Adan Soltren.

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MR. SOLTREN: Present.

8

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Doug Apple; I'm

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indeed present. Let the record show we have a

10

quorum.

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The next four meetings of this

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Board will be public hearings to comment on the

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proposed guidelines for the following dates and

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times: June 9th at the Theater at City Tech, New

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York City College of Technology, 275 Jay Street in

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Brooklyn, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.; June 12th, in the

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main theater of Hostos Community College, 450 Grand

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Concourse in the Bronx, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.;

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June 17th, at Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at 95th

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Street in Manhattan, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.; June

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27th, New York City Department of Health, 125

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Worth, second-floor auditorium, from 10:00 a.m. to

23

12:00 p.m.

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Anyone who wants to comment on the

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proposed guidelines for the public hearing must

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2 sign up to speak. People wishing to speak at the  
3 public hearing can pre-register in advance either  
4 through our website [nyc.gov/rgb](http://nyc.gov/rgb) or by calling (212)  
5 669-7480 from 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday.  
6 Pre-registration ends at noon on the business day  
7 prior to each hearing.

8 For those who did not pre-register  
9 for the hearings, registration is also available at  
10 public hearings from 5:00 to 8:00 on June 9th,  
11 12th, and 17th. And from 10:00 to 12:00 on June  
12 27th. All of our public hearings will be live  
13 streamed, and Spanish interpretation provided at  
14 each hearing.

15 We also accept comments on the  
16 proposed guidelines outside of our public hearings.  
17 You can submit written, audio, and video comments  
18 for the Board to review through June 27th.  
19 Instructions on how to submit these comments will  
20 be available on the board's website. I'm sorry.  
21 I'm being told to speak loudly.

22 FEMALE VOICE 1: We're working on  
23 adjusting the sound.

24 CHAIRMAN APPLE: I see. Okay.  
25 Thank you. You can't hear out there? Oh, over the

1

2     YouTube, got it.

3

4                     You can accept comments -- we  
5     already did the accept comments. Our final vote on  
6     the guideline will take place on Monday, June 30th,  
7     starting at 7:00 p.m. at El Museo del Barrio, 1230  
8     5th Avenue at 104th Street. The public may attend  
9     in person or may watch the vote live by streaming  
10    on the RGB YouTube channel. To find out how, visit  
11    the RGB website or call RGB.

12

13                    Before we proceed, I'd like to go  
14    over the rules and procedures for those who are  
15    testifying before the Board. If you wish to speak,  
16    you must confirm with RGB staff at the registration  
17    table located near the entrance of the hall.  
18    Speakers will not -- will not be called if they  
19    have not checked in at the registration table.  
20    There are Spanish interpreters here today. When  
21    registering to speak, please notify the staff you'd  
22    like an interpreter.

23

24                    I would try to call several names  
25    in advance to let you know that we'll be soon be  
26    called to speak. If you have materials to  
27    distribute to the Board, please give them to the  
28    RGB staff sitting at the sign-in table near the

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2 entrance. I will attempt to alternate speakers  
3 between tenants and owners, but this may not always  
4 be possible.

5

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

10

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

18

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

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2 will have a fair opportunity to be heard.

3

4 Thank you for your cooperation,  
5 and the Board is looking forward to hearing your  
6 comments regarding the proposed rent adjustments.

6

7 And now we're going to do that in  
8 Spanish.

8

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

10

11 CHAIRMAN APPLE: All right. Thank  
12 you very much (unintelligible.)

12

13 We'll now call speakers. I'm  
14 going to start with Ann Kochak (phonetic) Ann, if  
15 you can come up to the microphone.

15

16 And then after Ann, we have  
17 Alexander Korowski, and Musa Jamshed.

17

18 MS. KOCHAK: Good evening. My  
19 family has been operating housing since 1941, so we  
20 know that there's always good years and bad years.  
21 But the plain truth is that the majority of the  
22 housing in the city operates as a business and it  
23 has real expenses, and rent is how we cover those  
24 expenses.

24

25 While many tenants testify  
passionately about affordability, and I hear them,



1  
2 I must speak to the reality of operating  
3 125-year-old housing. It's not cheap. We had to  
4 take on a project unexpectedly recently to  
5 accommodate the new DSNY bins. It is expensive to  
6 bring any contractor into Manhattan these days to  
7 do any work. It cost us \$5,700 to do some concrete  
8 and masonry work in the front of the building to  
9 accommodate these new bins. It was unexpected and  
10 unplanned, and it occurred at the same time that  
11 our insurance renewal came up, which required us to  
12 pay our three-year premium up-front, and our  
13 biannual property taxes were also due.

14 So this was obviously very  
15 difficult for us to manage on a cash flow basis, so  
16 luckily, the contractor who we've used for many  
17 years, and we have a nice relationship with waited  
18 close to 60 days for us to pay him the \$5,700. So,  
19 you know, that's the real reality that many owners  
20 are facing monthly. You know, and the city's war  
21 on rats has costs associated with that.

22 You know, I would just also like  
23 to add that, you know, in a post-HSTPA world, the  
24 work that you all have to do is more and more  
25 important. I know you're in an impossible

1

2 situation, but I just ask you, you know, you heard  
3 all the testimony. I heard the term death spiral,  
4 you know, the financial health of these buildings  
5 is really in your hands and it's not just the  
6 financial health of the building, it's, you know,  
7 the -- all the tenants that live in these buildings  
8 too.

9

So thanks for your attention.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

11

Alexander Korowski. Did I get

12

that right?

13

MR. KOROWSKI: Yeah.

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: If you could be

15

closer to the microphone, it's a little hard to

16

hear.

17

MR. KOROWSKI: Yeah. How's this?

18

This is good?

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Yes. Thank you.

20

MR. KOROWSKI: I'll get an extra

21

seven seconds.

22

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay.

23

MR. KOROWSKI: Good evening,

24

everyone. My name is Alexander Korowski. I'm a

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rent-stabilized tenant, I have been for the last 14

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2 years. I come to you today because I had a  
3 terrible, senseless tragedy occur in the comfort of  
4 my own home. My firstborn child, Bin Yemen Zakaria  
5 Korowski (phonetic) died tragically. We had a  
6 steam radiator sporadically explode, our valve  
7 snapped, and all of the steam that was supposed to  
8 go through the pipe and pumped through the radiator  
9 ended up entering Bin Yemen's bedroom.

10 Bin Yemen lived like a king, he  
11 was about to celebrate his first-year birthday.  
12 The tragedy happened eight days before his one-year  
13 birthday party. We had a venue, we had a budget  
14 allocated, we even had a birthday outfit picked  
15 out. This was a terrible senseless tragedy.

16 I come today, not just for your  
17 sympathy and compassion, which I'm very thankful  
18 for, but also because we think that it's really  
19 important to have radiators inspected. As of now,  
20 boilers are looked at annually, every single  
21 building owner knows this, right? The boilers are  
22 looked at every single year. But when it comes to  
23 the radiators, they're essentially never touched,  
24 never looked at, and no one really bats an eye.

25 A lot of questions that we get

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2       seem to always correspond to, "Well, did you leave  
3       your child next to it? Could it be that if there  
4       was perhaps some kind of a cover, maybe if there  
5       was a radiator cover, maybe he would've survived."  
6       The answer is no, the valve snapped and no radiator  
7       cover would've done a single thing.

8

                  Our goal is to spread awareness.  
9       And this is not an "anti-landlord" thing, this is a  
10      child safety first thing. Our goal is to ensure  
11      that radiators are inspected annually, particularly  
12      for homes, residences, apartments, but especially  
13      pre-war buildings with children that are ages six  
14      and under.

15

                  Thank you.

16

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Musa  
17      Jamshed. Musa, are you here?

18

                  (No response.)

19

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE: We'll hold Musa  
20      till later. Are there any other individuals who  
21      want to testify? Because right now I don't have  
22      any slips. Just to remind you, if you want to  
23      testify, just be sure to pre-register outside and  
24      then you're welcome to come in and testify.

25

                  Do we know if there's folks

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2 outside or --

3

MALE VOICE 2: Yeah.

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We'll wait one  
5 minute, to see if there's folks going to come in.

6

Otherwise, we may take a break for  
7 a few minutes until there are more folks who want  
8 to testify.

9

So we'll take, like, a 10-minute  
10 break. So, thank you.

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

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(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay. I think  
15 we're going to get started. We have some speakers  
16 that have signed up. We want to give everybody a  
17 chance to speak. So, I'm going to call a few names  
18 to get us started. Sean Connolly, Sam Lee  
19 (phonetic), Leonardo Rallis (phonetic). Any of  
20 you in the room right now? Sean, Sam, or Leonardo?  
21 All right. We'll hold those.

22

Let's see if we get some others.  
23 Axel Sanchez? Maybe they're all outside still.  
24 Mark Radzinsky (phonetic) I guess they're outside.  
25 Yoshi C., letter C. Yoshi? No Yoshi. Theresa

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2 Evangelsta (phonetic). I think they're all  
3 outside. And Lucia Paredes (phonetic)? No.  
4 Hopefully, they'll come in shortly and we can  
5 start. Anybody who's here who'd like to speak,  
6 just please sign up and we'll let you come right  
7 up. What's your name, ma'am?

8 MS. ALEXIS: My name is Alexis  
9 Foot.

10 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Did you sign?

11 MS. ALEXIS: I did sign that.

12 CHAIRMAN APPLE: You did then come  
13 on up, you're here.

14 MS. ALEXIS: Can you hear me?

15 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Welcome to speak.  
16 Yes, we can hear you, ma'am.

17 MS. ALEXIS: Thank you so much.

18 Dear, Rent Guideline Board  
19 members, we, the residents of Far Rockaway demand  
20 that the RGB decrease rent and we demand a rent  
21 freeze. My neighbors and I need the rent freeze to  
22 be able to provide for our families, pay bills, and  
23 have room to save money. Families and single  
24 adults are having to -- having a challenging time  
25 paying the rent in Arverne View. I live in Far

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2 Rockaway in Arverne View and the development is  
3 owned by L&M and Bluestone, Triangle Equity.

4 Due to market value rent that has  
5 been set by HPD and New York City. As I joined the  
6 Met Council -- the Met Council -- the Med Housing  
7 Council, and over 130 organizations here today to  
8 demand the RGB do -- I'm sorry, give me a minute.  
9 We request the rent freeze. Due to the housing  
10 policies created by Michael Bloomberg and Rudy  
11 Giuliani, developers who create luxury housing  
12 under the affordable housing name, camouflage  
13 luxury housing under affordable housing name.  
14 Average families will not be able to afford \$4,000  
15 in rent when they're trying to pay daycare, Metro  
16 cards. You get it. All of the things.

17 New York City needs to start  
18 becoming more innovative in the ways that they  
19 provide housing and homeownership for working-class  
20 New Yorkers. I work at one of the most prestigious  
21 hospitals in New York City, and every day I hear my  
22 nurses complaining about how they wish they could  
23 afford a home or how the rent is too high. These  
24 people risk their lives every day to take care of  
25 sick patients and make sure that their families are

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2 well taken care of as well.

3

4 If you do not -- if you do not  
5 freeze the rent, you are going to make thousands of  
6 families and senior citizens homeless and young  
7 adults will be -- will become homeless, which means  
8 the trains and the shelters will be overpacked.

8

9 I have been living in the -- I  
10 have been living in New York City my whole life,  
11 and it is heartbreaking to hear my friends and  
12 families express fears of being homeless or  
13 displaced.

13

14 The City of New York owes families  
15 of minds of color reparations. Freezing the rent  
16 would be a form of providing reparations for  
17 descendants of Africans enslaved in this country  
18 and city, Wall Street-source slaves. And now the  
19 ancestors of these slaves are coming for what we  
20 are owed.

20

(Audience participation.)

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

22

23 Anybody else who's signed up to  
24 speak already that's in the room because we have a  
25 list, but they may not be in here right now. See  
if (unintelligible).



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(No response.)

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7

Is there anybody who's signed up here to speak? We have some names, but they haven't been in yet. Is there any, just want -- if anybody is in here and has signed up, we'll be happy to have you speak.

8

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THE INTERPRETER: (Translating from English to Spanish.)

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(No response.)

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Yes. If there's anybody who's signed up to speak and would like to announce themselves because we do have a list of names. I can go through them again. But if you've -- if you've actually signed up already, raise your hand, tell me who you are and we'll get you up to speak.

18

19

THE INTERPRETER: (Translating from English to Spanish.)

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MR. JAMSHED: Hi. My name is Musa Jamshed (phonetic). I'm on the list. Can you just make sure that you have me there?

23

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay. Yup. You're all set, please. Okay. Proceed, sir.

25

MR. JAMSHED: Thank you. Good

1

2 evening. My name is Musa Jamshed, and I am an  
3 attendant in Woodside and an organizer with the  
4 Party for Socialism and Liberation.

5

(Audience participation.)

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MR. JAMSHED: Thank you. I was  
7 born and raised in a rental on the east side of  
8 Manhattan. But like many New Yorkers, I could  
9 never afford to live in the neighborhood that I  
10 grew up in because we live under a corrupt  
11 capitalist system where the only thing that is  
12 stabilized is the profit, greed, and luxury of  
13 landlords.

14

These lords who control the  
15 completely undemocratic and corrupt Rent Guidelines  
16 Board averaged \$300,000 every year in profit from  
17 45 units in Queens. Meanwhile, we cannot dream to  
18 own one-single unit. And almost half of us hand  
19 over 30 percent of our hard-earned paychecks to  
20 cover our rent, even more. These greedy elites  
21 think that we are lesser than them, but it is  
22 tenants like us that make this city run. Without  
23 us, they have nothing.

24

Now, unfortunately, it is not  
25 enough to simply know that we are enough and to

1  
2 rage against these so-called lords, and we  
3 certainly will not be begging them for scraps. We  
4 must know our power. We must organize the 9  
5 million tenants of New York to take back our city  
6 and guarantee affordable, community-owned housing  
7 for all. We demand tenant control of housing  
8 policy and real rent control based on a reasonable  
9 percentage of our incomes, not the parasitic  
10 private market.

11 So, organize, join us. We have  
12 organizing meetings every Saturday at noon in  
13 Woodside for the party of Socialism and Liberation.  
14 And join me, when I say tenant, you say power.  
15 Tenant?

16 (Audience Participation.)

17 MR. JAMSHED: Tenant?

18 (Audience Participation.)

19 MR. JAMSHED: Tenant?

20 (Audience Participation.)

21 MR. JAMSHED: Tenant?

22 (Audience Participation.)

23 MR. JAMSHED: May it be an evening  
24 full of very powerful speeches. Let's make some  
25 noise for ourselves.

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(Audience participation.)

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

4

I'm sorry.

5

MR. RALLI: Hello? My -- I can go

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next. My name is Leonardo Ralli.

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Did you sign up,

8

sir?

9

MR. RALLI: Yes, I signed up.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay. Oh, yeah.

11

Yeah. We have you. Yup.

12

MR. RALLI: Okay.

13

CHAIRMAN APPLE: And then we'll go

14

-- we'll go back to the order after this.

15

MR. RALLI: Good afternoon,

16

everyone. My name is Leonardo. I'm a

17

schoolteacher. And we're here for the party for

18

Socialism and Liberation. We are here to denounce

19

the increases that are illegal in rent and to also

20

denounce the corruption that is at this table

21

today. Because, of course, we citizens of Queens

22

did not elect any of the people that are part of

23

this Board. They were set there by the -- they

24

were appointed by the, of course, the mayor. And

25

they themselves benefit from the laws that exist.

1  
2                   My fellow neighbors, they do not  
3 represent us. As we know, we come here every year  
4 and they increase their rents, and of course, the  
5 landlords line their pockets with money while our  
6 life conditions worsen. But my dear neighbors, we  
7 have power. We have collective power. We can  
8 change the system, this corrupt system which is not  
9 democratic. They're making our life impossible  
10 because of course, we all have the right to a home  
11 and also a right to a worthy life without having to  
12 work two jobs or more than 12 hours to pay for  
13 basic needs or for rent.

14                   Each month we feel the pressure  
15 because of inflation, because of all the basic  
16 services, including utilities. The reality is that  
17 living in New York is impossible, right?  
18 Homeowners continue to exploit us. They don't make  
19 any of the repairs. They don't correct or fix the  
20 elevators. We don't need any more increases; we  
21 need low rent, a system that truly represents all  
22 of us, my dear neighbors.

23                   (Audience participation.)

24                   MR. RALLI: And we need to  
25 continue organizing. We need to fight together so

1

2 that we can transform this corrupt system. So, of  
3 course, my dear neighbors, let us continue to work  
4 together to build a system that does work for us,  
5 where we have just rent for all of us because  
6 housing is a right. Please reach out to us, come  
7 out to Woodside, and continue organizing with us.

8

(Audience participation.)

9

MR. RALLI: So, I'm going to --  
10 I'm actually going to -- a chance tired -- no.  
11 Should we continue fighting? Yes.

12

(Chanting in Spanish.)

13

(Audience participation.)

14

MR. RALLI: Thank you.

15

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

16

MS. EVANGELISTA: Hi, my name is  
17 Theresa Evangelista. I was on the list earlier.

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We're going to go  
19 back to the -- yeah. Just --

20

MS. EVANGELISTA: Oh, sure.

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- hold on one  
22 second, if you don't mind.

23

MS. EVANGELISTA: No problem.

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: See if there's  
25 anybody, because there was others. Sean Connolly.

1

2

MR. CONNOLLY: Hello. I'm here.

3

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Theresa, we'll  
get to you. You're coming up, I promise.

5

6

7

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9

MR. CONNOLLY: Hello, my name is  
Sean. I'm a tenant attorney here in Jamaica, but I  
want to be clear, I'm not here as an attorney, or  
for my employer, I'm here again as a proud member  
of the Party for Socialism and Liberation.

10

(Audience participation.)

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I want to direct my State -- thank  
you very much. I'm actually going to direct -- I  
would like to direct my statements to the public  
members of the board. Because, you know, we know  
that the landlord representatives are corrupt,  
that's fine, and we know the tenant representatives  
are -- are good people, but there's only two of  
you.

19

20

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25

So, you know, the public members,  
I know that you're supposed to represent public  
interest, right? And I think that some of you  
probably think that that's what you're doing. But  
I really would urge you, and I'm saying this with  
-- I'm saying this with respect, I really would  
urge you to think about that. Okay?

1  
2 I know you think that you're  
3 qualified to sit on that board because you went to  
4 like fancy schools or something, and that's great.  
5 But all that actually qualifies you to do is to do  
6 the analysis. And that's fine. You do good  
7 studies, you could send out your reports, that's  
8 great. But none of that makes you qualified to  
9 represent the people in this room or to represent  
10 the tenants of New York City, okay? And I mean  
11 this genuinely. Every single tenant in this room  
12 who lives in a rent-stabilized apartment is more  
13 qualified to sit on that board than you all are.

14 (Audience participation.)

15 MR. CONNOLLY: These are decisions  
16 that impact, fundamentally impact the lives of the  
17 tenants in New York City. These are decisions that  
18 should be made by a body that is representative of  
19 and accountable to the tenants of New York City. I  
20 think that's not actually a crazy thing to say. I  
21 think a lot -- pretty much everyone agrees with  
22 that.

23 So, I, you know, the Rent  
24 Guidelines Board should be abolished. Sorry to say  
25 that to you all. But I'm not sorry to say that in



1

2 general. The Rent Guidelines Board should be  
3 abolished. It should be replaced by a body made up  
4 of tenants and representative of tenant interests,  
5 a body --

6 (Audience participation.)

7 MR. CONNOLLY: -- a body that can  
8 set wrench throughout the city at levels that  
9 tenants can actually afford. I also -- I want to  
10 respect, I know everyone who's calling for a rent  
11 freeze, I think we also support that. But we need  
12 to also come together as tenants to organize to get  
13 rid of this board completely and actually take  
14 power back for ourselves.

15 Thank you very much.

16 (Audience participation.)

17 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.  
18 Sam Lee.

19 (Audience participation.)

20 MR. LEE: Oh, sure. Okay. Hello.  
21 Good evening. My name is Sam and I have lived in  
22 Queens basically my whole life. My family and I  
23 have never had stable housing because we're  
24 constantly priced out of our homes and looking for  
25 a more affordable place to live constantly. But

1

2 we're still here. And I know my experience  
3 reflects the experience of many New Yorkers.

4

A 2024 study found that for New  
5 Yorkers living in rent-stabilized apartments,  
6 almost half of them are rent burden. We would all  
7 have to earn 134,000 a year for rent in New York to  
8 be considered affordable. That's outrageous.  
9 Almost half of the people in rent-stabilized  
10 apartments pay 30 percent or more of their income  
11 on rent each month. On top of that, we pay taxes,  
12 yet we have no say on how our money is being spent.  
13 We have to spend money on bus fares and train  
14 fares, groceries, utilities, and all of that.  
15 Prices is going up, inflation is going up. All of  
16 that is going up. And then there's nothing left in  
17 our pockets.

18

No one should be charged this much  
19 for shelter. It's inhumane. Housing is essential  
20 human right, one that the government should  
21 provide, protect, and guarantee for all its people.  
22 Rather than raising rent on working-class people,  
23 we should be taxing the Wall Street billionaires to  
24 fund quality public housing for everyone.

25

(Audience participation.)

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MR. LEE: The erosion of rent control and public housing and yearly rent hikes affects all of us. Being forced to move out again and again is causing a burden on me and my family. Eventually, I will not be able to afford to live in the city that I've known my whole life. Eventually, I will not be able to afford the rent that the city pays me to care, and teach our children in our public schools, that the -- to the board, consider the future of the city and the people who live in it, and what will happen to us when the rent burden becomes intolerable. To everyone else here who is a tenant we need to organize, we need to mobilize to stop these rent hikes and evictions.

(Audience participation.)

MR. LEE: We need to -- we need to demand accountability against the landlords who violate our rights. Come talk to me or anyone who's with their party for socialism and liberation if you're ready to fight back. Eric Adams and the RGB do not, have shown us, they do not represent our interest. We have to unite and build a movement and secure our own rights and our own

1

2 interests, and fight for our rights and our homes  
3 and our fight for our future. Thank you.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

6 say power.

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

8

MR. LEE: Tenant?

9

(Audience participation.)

10

MR. LEE: Tenant?

11

(Audience participation.)

12

13 you say also fight back. Fight back. Woo.

14

(Audience participation.)

15

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

16

(Audience participation.)

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Now, thank you.

18

19 I just want to remind everybody a  
20 couple of the rules. Some of you were new and  
21 coming in. It's -- we ask you to limit your speech  
22 to two minutes because we -- we do have many  
23 speakers now signed up. We want to make sure  
everybody gets a chance before we're done.

24

I'm going to call a couple names.

25

FEMALE VOICE 1: Half the -- half

1

2 the room can't understand. Can you please  
3 interpret?

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Yeah.

5

FEMALE VOICE 1: We have all my  
6 neighbors are here and they can't understand.

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We will interpret  
8 when people get -- that aren't able to speak in the  
9 mic, we'll do the interpretation of those. I'm  
10 going to call a couple names, Axel Sanchez --

11

(Audience participation.)

12

CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- Mark. I also  
13 would ask Mark Radzinski if he's here to get ready  
14 to come up and also --

15

MS. SANCHEZ: Hi.

16

CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- Yoshi C. So,  
17 those are the next two names. And I would ask you,  
18 ma'am, to -- Ms. Sanchez, please.

19

MS. SANCHEZ: Okay. So, I won't  
20 start unless there's interpretation. So, I want to  
21 secure that is the -- who's going to interpret in  
22 Spanish, because I'm going to be speaking in  
23 English.

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We have many,  
25 many speakers tonight. Ma'am, I'm so sorry, but we

1

2 really need to make sure we can hear everybody do  
3 their speech. So, I ask you to go ahead.

4

(Audience participation.)

5

MS. SANCHEZ: You know what?

6

That's okay. I know you guys are scared.

7

(Audience participation.)

8

MS. SANCHEZ: I know you guys are

9

scared. I'll give you that. My name is Axel. I

10

was born in Elmhurst Hospital, where I also did my

11

clinical rotation for my respiratory therapy

12

degree. I grew up in Lefrak City and still live

13

there. I'm Queens and Queens is me. Richard S.

14

LeFrak, the owner of LeFrak City, has a net worth

15

of \$2.6 billion. The median household income for

16

all rent-stabilized tenants in New York City,

17

including Lefrak, is \$60,000 a year.

18

Mr. Lefrak's financial success

19

depends on the financial struggle of Lefrak City

20

tenants. His wealth depends on the exploitation of

21

thousands of tenants living in fear, just like

22

you're feeling now, by the way of eviction and

23

homelessness. While Mr. Lefrak can own multiple

24

homes, cars, and yachts, the tenants of Lefrak and

25

all rent-stabilized tenants will struggle and many

1

2 will fail to secure the one home they have.

3

4 A study by the government showed  
5 that Lefrak City was a site of the most evictions  
6 in the city in 2023. This rent hike will produce  
7 more unhoused people, increase reliance on social  
8 services with which the federal administration has  
9 already made cuts to. This Rent Guidelines Board  
10 is shameful for using the suffering of the many for  
11 profit. But the tenants from New York City are  
12 courageous, and we refuse, refuse to be pawns. We  
13 are the workers of the city. We built this city  
14 and we will never back down until we get what we  
15 deserve. Am I right?

15

16 And also, you're going to give me  
17 20 seconds back because I was asking you for  
18 interpretation. Thank you.

18

19 We have had enough of starving our  
20 own pockets to feed the greed of the modern-day  
21 robber barons. We say no to rent hikes and  
22 evictions. In fact, we demand that the rent of all  
23 tenants be reduced and capped. Tenants who came  
24 before us fought and struggled and won rent  
25 control. And we'll continue to fight to defend it.  
The tenacity of the masses will always defeat the

1

2 greed of the few. And if you expect that we will  
3 give up, I want you to look at this room and know  
4 that you've already lost.

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

6

Mark Rudzinsky (phonetic),  
7 followed by Yoshi C, and then Theresa, I know  
8 you're here. Theresa is next.

9

(Audience participation.)

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Mark Rudzinsky.

11

Sir, please proceed.

12

MR. RUDZINSKY: I'm glad you're  
13 here listening to us. Even though we see the way  
14 this board is composed is fundamentally  
15 undemocratic. To give equal weight to landlords  
16 and tenants, when tenants outnumber landlords by so  
17 much in this city. Our landlord doesn't even live  
18 in the city, doesn't even operate from the city.  
19 It would be democratic to reflect the real  
20 proportion and have us select our own  
21 representatives. This is why you as a board, have  
22 an extra responsibility to pay the most attention  
23 to what we the people need.

24

In the case of my building, the  
25 RGB's past rent hikes have resulted in unaffordable



1  
2 rents for me and my neighbors, despite unresolved  
3 problems of brown water coming out of the faucets.  
4 Our rents have gone up, the landlord corporation  
5 makes money, the building's problems are unsolved.  
6 The work that's done to keep the building up, the  
7 work that's done to keep the building up, we pay  
8 separately in the form of everlasting MCIs. So  
9 it's the responsibility of this board to reflect  
10 the reality of the city and raise the rent by zero  
11 percent until we can put a system in place that is  
12 fair.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

15 I'm going to call up Yoshi C and  
16 then Theresa Evangelista and Selena DeLaCruz. So,  
17 please proceed, ma'am.

18 MS. YOSHI: Hello, my name is  
19 Yoshi. I'm an organizer with the Party for  
20 Socialism and Liberation, a lifelong resident of  
21 Jamaica, Queens.

22 And like many of us here, I live  
23 in a rent-stabilized unit. And like all New  
24 Yorkers, I have seen my rent continue to climb year  
25 after year. This is not my first time speaking out

1

2     against another looming rent hike. It did not make  
3     sense then, it does not make sense now that nine  
4     appointed people get to choose and decide whether  
5     or not the rent goes up for millions of tenants  
6     when year after year tenants have demanded a rent  
7     rollback.

8

                  The coalition for the homeless  
9     reported that over 110,000 people slept in a  
10    shelter every night in March. We know thousands  
11    more find shelter on the street. We see them, we  
12    walk past them every single day. That same month,  
13    your board released a report stating that landlords  
14    with rent-stabilized units saw their income  
15    increased by 12.1 percent. Now you can lie all you  
16    want and say that you need higher rents to maintain  
17    and repair our units, the fact of the matter is, as  
18    many will attest, you are not repairing our units.  
19    Many of us have to deal with mold, bedbugs,  
20    roaches, rats, plumbing and heating issues, and yet  
21    you still want to raise our rent.

22

                  Why should landlords live in  
23    luxury, hold thousands of empty units, meanwhile  
24    people are struggling to live in dignity and many  
25    of us are forced out on the street.

1  
2 I want to remind tenants here of  
3 our power. We are the reason why rent control and  
4 rent stabilization exist. We won rent freezes in  
5 2015 and 2016, and we did that by doing this,  
6 getting together, organizing, and fighting back  
7 against a corrupt Rent Guidelines Board. And I  
8 want to emphasize, it's not just this corrupt Rent  
9 Guidelines Board, is the entire capitalist system  
10 that puts profit over the well-being of people.  
11 People should live in dignity, not have to do this  
12 every single year. Four years in a row you have  
13 raised our rent.

14 We are not here to beg. We are  
15 here to fight back. And we don't just want to a  
16 rent freeze, we demand a rent rollback. Tenants  
17 should have full control of the Rent Guidelines  
18 Boards, we're the ones that should decide the fate  
19 of housing in New York City. Shame on you.

20 (Audience participation.)

21 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.  
22 Theresa. Theresa Evangelista. I  
23 know she was here earlier. There she is.

24 MS. EVANGELISTA: Thanks to  
25 everyone who spoke up so far. I appreciate your

1

2 energy. I'm going to tell a story tonight. My  
3 name is Theresa, I'm here with the PSL, Party for  
4 Socialism and Liberation.

5 I came here tonight to tell you a  
6 story about possibility and hope. There once was a  
7 city that much like ours was experiencing a housing  
8 crisis. They had a shortage of affordable housing.  
9 There were no -- there were rents that were rising  
10 for years. After a housing emergency was finally  
11 declared, the city's Rent Guidelines Board voted to  
12 reduce rents by 15 percent. Yes. The Rent  
13 Guidelines Board voted to reduce rent by 15  
14 percent.

15 The city I'm talking about is  
16 called Kingston, New York. It's just two hours  
17 away from here. And this six-to-three vote  
18 happened in November 2022. I said this was a story  
19 about possibility, and this outcome could not have  
20 been possible without months of organizing and hard  
21 work by local tenant and activist organizations,  
22 and by political groups who came together to learn  
23 about their rights and advocate for themselves at  
24 public hearings just like this one.

25 The plot twist in my story is that

1

2 the Kingston renters have yet to see a rent  
3 reduction. Who knows why? Because real estate  
4 companies have appealed the vote, prioritizing  
5 profits over people.

6 The fight -- but the story's not  
7 over. The fight for guaranteed affordable housing  
8 in Kingston and across this country continues. The  
9 moral of the story is if we want housing to be  
10 enshrined as a human right and not a product to be  
11 sold or rented for profit, we need to fight for it,  
12 together. We have to connect our struggles from  
13 Kingston to Queens and beyond to build a movement  
14 that will take on this corrupt and broken system.

15 What do we want our story to be?  
16 A future of endless rent hikes, mass evictions, and  
17 homelessness? No. We want a future where every  
18 person is guaranteed a dignified home. And where  
19 decisions about housing are made by and for  
20 tenants, not by RGB or Wall Street.

21 If you want to build this future  
22 together, connect with me or anyone else in a red  
23 PSL T-shirt and join our fight. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

25 Selena DeLaCruz (phonetic). Lucia

1

2 Paredes (phonetic). And then Mario Golden. So,  
3 Selena.

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MS. DELACRUZ: My name is Selena.

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I'm part of Tri-continental Institute for Social  
Research Party for Socialism and Liberation, and  
I'm a rent-stabilized tenant in Jackson Heights. I  
moved to my apartment this year after my previous  
landlord announced she would increase my rent by 70  
percent, 70. Yeah. And then she did. Rent is  
already high as it is, and I cannot afford the  
increase being that you all are discussing. And  
neither can my neighbors, many of whom are here.

I thought that living in a  
rent-stabilized building would afford some  
stability. But the increases in rent are so high  
that it barely makes a difference. When people  
talk about Queens, they talk about how vibrant and  
diverse the community is. And those are the people  
you've heard from today. But that's the community  
that you're voting on displacing by increasing rent  
by such a high amount.

Many of my neighbors have lived in  
the same apartment for 10, 20, 30 or more years.  
They're wonderful people and they're here today.

1

2 Many of them are here today.

3

(Audience participation.)

4

5 MS. DELACRUZ: Housing is a basic  
6 human right and no one should risk being forced out  
7 of their homes or into hardship so that landlords  
8 can line their pockets. According to the RGBs 2025  
9 report, renter income in Queens decreased by 3.1  
10 percent in 2023. But landlords' net operating  
11 income increased by 11.4 percent. So, that means  
12 after all their expenses. And this at the same  
13 time, 21 percent of tenants in rent-stabilized  
14 housing experience food insecurity, and the average  
15 number of New Yorkers in -- in New York City  
16 homeless shelters increased by 8.6 percent. So, my  
17 neighbour who's sitting back there was just saying,  
18 "Doesn't New York say has -- say it has a  
19 homelessness problem?" Well, how should we fix it?  
20 Maybe it's not by increasing rent, maybe it's by  
21 freezing rent, maybe it's by giving people  
22 affordable housing, and maybe it's by recognizing  
23 housing is a human right.

23

(Audience participation.)

24

25 MS. DELACRUZ: Landlords and the  
people pushing these increases want us to think

1  
2 that this won't work. That we're just here and  
3 we're yapping and it won't matter and this isn't  
4 possible. And that if they don't increase our  
5 rent, everything will fall apart. But it's not  
6 true. And I work for a research institute that  
7 puts out studies, that looks at other countries and  
8 says, well, in this study, in this country, housing  
9 is enshrined as a human right in the constitution.  
10 And this is a shame on our city. And it's a shame  
11 on our country. And it's a shame on this board.

12                   Housing is a human right, and  
13 instead of increasing our rents by untenable  
14 amounts, I would deplore this board, and I'm  
15 wrapping up, and I would deplore this board to  
16 consider policies like making New York a  
17 rent-controlled city where landlords cannot charge  
18 more than 20 percent of tenants household income or  
19 seize vacant. There's all these buildings that are  
20 just sitting there not doing anything, and people  
21 are living on the streets and suffering.

22                   So for the other tenants here, if  
23 you want to make these kinds of policies a reality,  
24 you heard it already. People in the red'shirt  
25 Saturday meetings -- every Saturday at 12 o'clock



1

2 in Woodside, 5814 Roosevelt Ave. But I really hope  
3 that you guys let your conscious speak and make a  
4 better decision.

5 (Audience participation).

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

8 Lucia Paredes, Mario Golden, and  
9 then Jose Lopez. And we'll need translation for  
10 Jose Lopez. Ms. Paredes?

11 MS. PAREDES: Okay, I got it.  
12 Good evening. My name is Lucia Paredes and I work  
13 as a city council case worker right here in Queens.  
14 I'm not here at the behest of my employer, I'm here  
15 in my own regard with the Party of Socialism and  
16 Liberation.

17 Every day I meet seniors, disabled  
18 tenants, and working families barely hanging on.  
19 Not because they're irresponsible, but because the  
20 city is becoming unlivable for the very people who  
21 built it. Rent hikes on stabilized apartments are  
22 not just unsustainable, but they're cruel.

23 Rent regulation was meant to  
24 protect communities in Flushing. But instead, we  
25 created a system where landlords hold more power

1

2 than tenants. And year after year, the Rent  
3 Guidelines Board approves increases like clockwork,  
4 acting like a neutral body, when in reality it  
5 serves the interest of landlords and the real  
6 estate lobby.

7 Meanwhile, programs like SCRIE,  
8 meant to protect low-income seniors are so  
9 bureaucratic that fewer than 60 percent of eligible  
10 people are enrolled. They're blocked by paperwork  
11 and agencies that don't communicate.

12 As of May 2025, the average rent  
13 in Flushing is over \$2,000 a month, yet it's still  
14 the most affordable neighborhood in Queens. 24  
15 percent of the national average, and we call that  
16 affordable? No.

17 Every year it's the same story.  
18 The rent goes up and tenants are told to deal with  
19 it. Enough. We need a new vision, one where  
20 housing is a right, not a privilege. So, I'm not  
21 just here to speak, I'm here to fight. I'm asking  
22 you to fight with me.

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MS. PAREDES: To every tenant  
25 listening, organize, speak out, show up. Let's

1

2 build a power together and demand a system that  
3 puts people over profit. Our need outweighs your  
4 greed. Let's fight for a New York City we deserve.

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

6

Jose Lopez. I'm sorry -- I'm  
7 sorry, Mario Golden. I made -- my mistake. My  
8 mistake.

9

MR. GOLDEN: Hello.

10

(Audience participation.)

11

MR. GOLDEN: I'd like to make my  
12 statement in Spanish if that's fine.

13

CHAIRMAN APPLE: It's okay.

14

MR. GOLDEN: Good afternoon to  
15 everyone. My name is Mario, I'm 60 years old. I  
16 live with my husband in Elmhurst Queens. We are  
17 both disabled, and our monthly budget is \$2,600 --  
18 \$2,200 of which 1,800 go to rent, which leaves us  
19 with \$400 literally to pay for the light bills, and  
20 we would not be able to make ends meet if it were  
21 not for the benefits that we have at the moment.

22

Last year, we had to fight in  
23 order to protect ourselves because the owners of  
24 the apartment where we live increased the rent in  
25 the last three years, 36 percent. It has been a

1

2 very difficult struggle for us to be able to  
3 protect ourselves because aside from this, we live  
4 in a co-op. And we've found out that those of us  
5 that rent co-ops have no protection whatsoever  
6 because, of course, the lobby for co-ops made sure  
7 to exclude people that protect themselves from rent  
8 increases in New York.

9                   How is it possible that you allow  
10 this to happen? How is it that you allow people to  
11 live in extreme squalor? How is that possible? I  
12 hope that you're not just a bunch of puppets and  
13 that you are not just enabling crooks because you  
14 are forcing us to live in complete and abject  
15 poverty.

16                   And of course, ladies and  
17 gentlemen, I hope you don't fall asleep with my  
18 comment. The gentleman over there who's yawning at  
19 the moment because, of course, this makes us feel  
20 as though you couldn't care less what happens to  
21 millions of people in the city that live in these  
22 conditions.

23                   I hope that we will fight together  
24 because all 9 million people in this country -- in  
25 the city have to work together. We need to make

1

2 sure that we unite so that we can put an end to  
3 this avalanche of greed. And so that we can create  
4 laws that will put an end to this abuse.

5 (Audience participation.)

6 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.  
7 Jose Lopez.

8 (Audience participation.)

9 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Jose Lopez.  
10 Lopez followed by Brandon Morrell. Amanda Barreto.  
11 Jose?

12 MR. MORELL: If you don't bother,  
13 even though I see every single one of you don't  
14 even speak Spanish. And if you do, you're not  
15 bothering to give interpretation. I will do -- I  
16 will give my -- I will give my testimony in  
17 Spanish.

18 Colleagues, friends, families,  
19 peers, participating groups that are here, tenants,  
20 I wish you a good afternoon. Good evening.

21 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Use the mic if  
22 you could, Mr. Jose.

23 MR. MORELL: My name is Brandon  
24 Morrell, and I'm a member of the party for  
25 Socialism and Liberation. We're an organization

1

2 that's anti-racist, anti-communist --  
3 anti-capitalist, sorry. And the reason we're  
4 united here tonight is not really -- we don't want  
5 to continue wasting our time over here, but we need  
6 -- we need to get together to fix this problem.

7 So, we're living in a permanent  
8 crisis currently and there's 46 percent of tenants  
9 that live in rent-stabilized apartments currently  
10 that cannot continue to pay with increases. They  
11 cannot continue in this situation. Mm-hmm  
12 (affirmative). And who are they? They're the  
13 elderly, disabled people, they are single pregnant  
14 women who live with their children and they are  
15 closer to eviction than they are to stability. And  
16 quite honestly, it's a fucking embarrassment.

17 And you should be ashamed. This  
18 is all just a matter of shame and you should all be  
19 ashamed. This organization, which should be  
20 populist and democratic and actually works against  
21 the interest, you guys do the opposite. And it's  
22 also an organization that's just like a puppet of  
23 the mayor and it basically just works against our  
24 interest.

25 So all tenants, all social justice

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2 workers and or fighters or activists, what we're  
3 demanding is rent -- something simple. We're  
4 demanding for the rent not to increase, we are  
5 demanding for the rent to stop, we are demanding to  
6 stop evictions. We want repairs, we want  
7 investments, and in this -- in our housing  
8 situation.

9

(Audience participation.)

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

11

MR. MORELL: We're only demanding  
12 one more simple thing. What we want is to  
13 institutionalize the right to a fair housing, the  
14 right to have dignity, to live with dignity, and  
15 with pride. You should be ashamed of yourselves.  
16 You are just basically representing capitalist  
17 people. Racist people, prejudiced people, and  
18 basically, other people's interests that doesn't  
19 include people of color, the people in the city,  
20 people from Africa, people from America, people  
21 from Asia.

22

And basically, I'm not going to  
23 say thank you to you. I'm going to say thank you  
24 to everyone else that is here, that's present.

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

1

2 Amanda Barreto. Amanda Barreto?

3 (No response.)

4 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Elba Lopez

5 (phonetic), and Anwar Kunkir. Amanda, are you

6 here? Amanda? Oh, I think she's right here. Just

7 to remind everybody, if you want to sign up and you

8 haven't yet signed up, please do so. We'll be

9 closing the sign-up by 8 o'clock. We can go as

10 long as we need to with anybody who signed up. But

11 you must sign up by eight to speak.

12 MS. BARRETO: Good evening. My

13 name is Amanda Barreto.

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Yeah, we can't

15 hear. Speak in the mic, ma'am. Thank you.

16 MS. BARRETO: Good evening,

17 everyone. My name is Amanda Barreto, and I live at

18 8805 171st in Jamaica in a building with

19 rent-stabilized -- that is rent-stabilized. I'd

20 like to let you know all of the difficulties that

21 I'm going through at the moment.

22 CHAIRMAN APPLE: As much. It's

23 not working.

24 MALE VOICE 1: I can't hear them.

25 CHAIRMAN APPLE: We're going to



1

2     get it.    Okay.

3

                  MS. BARRETO:   I could tell you all  
4     of the hardship that I'm living through at the  
5     moment.    That the rent in the city is too high and  
6     that I can't even make the rent payment I pay now,  
7     and of course, much less any sort of increase.   I  
8     could tell you that the rent goes up every single  
9     year, but my income doesn't.

10

                  I worked in this country for 30  
11    years.    I'm now retired, and I receive \$1,200.   My  
12    rent is \$1,100, and of course, I need to live.   I  
13    need to eat, I need other things, of course.

14

                  Year after year in every borough  
15    we share our stories.   Of course, we express all of  
16    our worries, but the RGB doesn't care about any of  
17    that.    Every single year, they've responded with a  
18    rent increase.   Of course, rent stabilization is  
19    supposed to ensure that rent continues to be  
20    something accessible to all.   And that, of course,  
21    is just to support owners and continue to deviate  
22    all of the monies so that owners continue to become  
23    richer every year.   A rent freeze is a minimum at  
24    this point.

25

(Audience participation.)

1  
2 MS. BARREATO: And this board  
3 isn't even willing to consider that. Of course,  
4 the profits for owners have gotten up 12 percent.  
5 And of course, if you're an owner in the city of  
6 New York, that means you don't need any help.  
7 However, 2.4 million tenants with rent  
8 stabilization are suffering at present. We don't  
9 receive any services, and of course, we no longer  
10 generate the same type of income.  
11 We know full well that when owners  
12 enact any type of rent increase, that money goes to  
13 line their pockets and not to any of the  
14 much-needed repairs in our buildings. But of  
15 course, the constant worry of this board is to  
16 worry about owners who, of course, make a fortune  
17 on us. We have nothing. And of course, you also  
18 make sure to make good, uncertain investments. So,  
19 of course, this year I've opted not to share my  
20 story with the board. On the contrary, there are  
21 many tenants in this room right now who have rent  
22 stabilization here in Queens.  
23 What I would like to let you know  
24 is that I have no trust in this board. And just to  
25 let you know that this board and this entire

1

2 process is a complete and utter farce. We see you  
3 and we denounce your protection of the people that  
4 are owners in the city, and the fact that you think  
5 that that is more important than people's basic  
6 needs in the city.

7 And this is exactly why we are all  
8 here today, to let you know that this board and  
9 this entire process is indeed a farce. RGB is a  
10 farce. Now, my neighbors will also provide their  
11 own statements in Korean, Bengali, and in Mandarin  
12 as well.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank  
15 you.

16 Elba Lopez. Elba followed by  
17 Anwar Kunkir. Pronounce that right, I'm sorry.  
18 And Nasim Ramar (phonetic).

19 Elba, please proceed.

20 MS. LOPEZ: Good evening to all.  
21 I am here representing my neighbors that are here  
22 with me and myself. I live in Cosmopolitan on  
23 Woodside. I've been living in the same building  
24 now for 45 years, with neighbors that have been  
25 there for 50 or more years. And one of my

1

2 neighbors lives on the fifth floor. She's 75 years  
3 old, and she has not been given a ground-floor  
4 apartment.

5

Every single year, they've  
6 increased the rent. I work as a security guard,  
7 and my income does not allow me to pay the rent,  
8 let alone an increase every single year. Of  
9 course, these apartments are -- these units are too  
10 small to be able to be adaptable to so that we can  
11 adapt them to our living styles. Aside from that,  
12 we have roaches, we have vermin, we have ants and  
13 other undesirable animals.

14

Recently, there was an accident in  
15 the apartment where the ceiling caved in on the TV  
16 in the living room and it ruined the TV. And what  
17 was the first thing that they did? They charged me  
18 the rent. I asked them to provide me at least a  
19 month's time so that I could gather the money to  
20 pay the rent, and they continued to charge me the  
21 rent.

22

Of course, our floors are creaking  
23 and they're old. And if we ask them to repair  
24 those floors, they won't do that, of course,  
25 because what they want to do is have a sleeve so

1

2     that they can repair these apartments, adapt them  
3     so they can have more tenants in them, and raise  
4     the rent, triple the costs.

5

6                     I kindly ask all of you there  
7     sitting at this desk to please put your hands on  
8     your hearts and conscience and think about this.  
9     And please make sure that the rent is stable so  
10    that we can continue making our rent payments so  
11    that with the very little money that we make, we  
12    can actually pay our rent.

12

13                    I do appreciate that you're all  
14    sitting there and listening to us.

14

15                    I thank you for that. Thanks to  
16    all of you for your support.

16

17                    CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.  
18                    Anwar kubakir. Did I pronounce  
19    that right, sir?

19

20                    THE INTERPRETER: That individual,  
21    the interpreter stated that the gentleman went  
22    outside for the prayer.

22

23                    CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay, so we'll  
24    come back -- to and is that the same for Nasim  
25    Raman (phonetic) also out, or is Nasim here?

25

(No response.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Maybe out also.

3

Kristen Kay, followed by Matam

4

Khan (ph), followed by David Garber. Kristen Kay.

5

(Audience Participation.)

6

MS. KAY: Hello, can you hear me?

7

I'm Kristen. I'm also an organizer with the party

8

for Socialism and Liberation. I anticipate that in

9

a couple of weeks when Mr. Ehrlich and Ms. Smyth,

10

who represent the owner interests on the board

11

inevitably vote for rent increases, they will soon

12

tell us, condescendingly, that we don't understand

13

enough, that we are too stupid, and that our demand

14

for a rent increase is unrealistic.

15

They'll talk about operating

16

costs, inflation, fair returns, market realities.

17

But let's talk about what is actually, unrealistic.

18

The idea that any of us working New Yorkers can

19

withstand any additional rent increase.

20

Here's the reality from your own

21

2025 annual report. 43 percent of rent-stabilized

22

tenants are rent-burdened. Renter income dropped

23

in Queens by three percent last year. And in

24

Queens, landlords meanwhile, saw profits jump 11

25

percent, more than 11 percent, averaging \$300,000

1

2     annually after expenses.

3

4                     Tenants' median income is \$60,000  
5     a year.   So what's truly unrealistic?   Forcing  
6     working-class New Yorkers to absorb yet another  
7     rent hike, forcing people out of their homes,  
8     forcing parents to choose between feeding their  
9     kids and paying their rent.   They might talk about  
10    market realities, but let's look at the realities  
11    shaped by policies that favor owner interests.

12

13                    421A gave landlords billions -- or  
14     developers billions of dollars in tax breaks and it  
15     failed to deliver the affordable housing that we  
16     need.   It left behind affordable units that require  
17     six-figure incomes, vacancy decontrol, let  
18     landlords push tenants out, and jack up our rents.  
19     We lost hundreds of thousands of affordable units.  
20     Displacement became policy, gentrification  
21     skyrocketed.   And this board, year after year sides  
22     with landlords, not tenants.

23

24                    So when the Guidelines Board says  
25     that a rent freeze is unrealistic, ask; is it more  
26     unrealistic than a system that puts profit over  
27     basic housing rights?   The Rent Guidelines Board  
28     can't bullshit us.   We know our solutions are

1

2 rooted in reality and justice. It is realistic to  
3 cap our rents, to restore lost stabilized units, to  
4 enforce tenant protections, to end racist  
5 rezonings, and to stop backroom deals with  
6 developers. It is realistic to treat housing as a  
7 human right, not a profit engine.

8

(Audience participation.)

9

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

10

MS. KAY: We, the tenants, are not  
11 the ones who are out of touch with reality. We  
12 make this city run and we demand real solutions to  
13 the housing crisis.

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

15

I just want to let everybody know  
16 if you want to register and you haven't, please do  
17 so because, after 8 o'clock, we will not do more  
18 registrations. We do have many more speakers and  
19 we want to hear from everybody. Thank you.

20

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

22

Matam Khan, David Garber, and  
23 Douglas Osling (phonetic). Matam?

24

MR. GARBER: No, I'm David.

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: You're David?



1

2

MR. GARBER: Yes.

3

4

5

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Is Matam not here? Just want to make sure. We'll come back to him if he comes in. David Garber, please proceed, sir.

7

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MR. GARBER: Hi. I just want to say that I'm at a rent-stabilization apartment for 20 years. And of course, there's no repairs. We know that people are moving and whatever. And I must say like two weeks ago, I'm living in Sunnyside, and it was about 2 o'clock in the morning. I happened to be up, and I smelled the smoke on the third floor. I'm on the fourth floor, knock on the door, and no one answers. There was a big fire in Sunnyside, as many people know, many years ago.

So, you know, I knock on the door, no answer. I call the fire department my super lives in the next building. And of course, the firefighters came, they knocked on the door. I don't know. They opened it up. Well, the super was there. And he says to me, why didn't you call me first? What? And I was speechless. What was I going to do? Go ring on his door in the next

1

2 building. I mean a fire could happen, I couldn't  
3 believe it.

4 Now I found out from people that,  
5 you know, the landlord has to pay for this. So  
6 what? The building should go down or they don't  
7 give a fuck about the building. But I decided to  
8 leave it alone because my husband was like, just,  
9 you know, whatever it is. I don't know if that's  
10 his fear.

11 And then I come here and I know  
12 that this whole thing is a shame. All right, I've  
13 dealt with that two weeks ago. I come, please,  
14 please, please keep the clapping down, because I'm  
15 going to say what I have to say right now. The  
16 third man on the left, you show no interest in us,  
17 okay? Shame. The three Caucasian men here, but I  
18 guess you don't give a fuck about us because the  
19 whole thing is a sham. But you know what? You  
20 could put up appearances. Maybe you guys have  
21 money, maybe because you work for the landlords,  
22 but you could have a little compassion or just  
23 don't be there. Thank you.

24 (Audience participation.)

25 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Douglas Osling.

1

2 Douglas Osling. Yuyi Chan (phonetic), Kung Heyung  
3 (phonetic).

4

Douglas?

5

(No response.)

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I don't see him  
7 here. I don't see the -- let's go on to Yuyi Chan.  
8 Yuyi?

9

(No response.)

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: No. Kung Heyung?  
11 Kung Heyung.

12

(No response.)

13

All right. Kung HeLee (phonetic).  
14 Kung. Ma'am, are you -- I'm sorry. You are?

15

MS. APENA: She sent me to the  
16 podium.

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Just wait a  
18 minute. I'm sorry. Your name, ma'am?

19

MS. APENA: Apena.

20

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I don't think you  
21 were on -- did you sign up, ma'am?

22

MS. APENA: Yes, I did. It's  
23 outside. I did talk to your colleagues outside.  
24 I'm right here.

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We want to make

1

2     sure everybody gets to speak, and we want to make  
3     sure we're fair to everybody.

4

                  MS. APENA:   I understand.   I'll  
5     keep it short and simple.

6

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE:   I can't hear you,  
7     ma'am.

8

                  MS. APENA:   I'll keep it short and  
9     simple.   Good evening, everybody.

10

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE:   What is your  
11    name, ma'am? What is your name?

12

                  MS. APENA:   I said it for the  
13    hundred times, Apena.

14

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE:   Pena.

15

                  MS. APENA:   Apena.   A-p-e-n-a.  
16    It's very simple.

17

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE:   We have --

18

                  MS. APENA:   It's outside.   I just  
19    signed up.

20

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE:   You did sign up?

21

                  MS. APENA:   Yes.

22

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE:   All right, go.  
23    Please.

24

                  MS. APENA:   I'll keep it simple.

25

                  CHAIRMAN APPLE:   But I would ask

1

2 everybody, we want to let everybody speak.

3

4 MS. APENA: And I just said to  
you, I'll keep it simple.

5

6 CHAIRMAN APPLE: And we ask people  
to follow -- because otherwise, people will not get  
7 their opportunity. We want to be very fair to  
8 everybody.

9

MS. APENA: All right. So --

10

11 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please, ma'am.  
Proceed. Please.

12

MS. APENA: All right. Okay.

13

14 Like I said, the name is Apena. Good evening to my  
fellow tenants.

15

16 So in essence, when it comes to  
housing, I think it's just a human right. We all  
17 deserve a decent respect of a place to live. And  
18 it turns out that even before I retired, I walked  
19 -- I had a very good city job. And even at that,  
20 living in an affordable apartment, I really  
21 couldn't afford it because it was close to \$2,000.  
22 Right here in New York City, Queens, New York.

23

24 New York City is a very beautiful  
city. It offers so much; I would hate to go  
25 anywhere else. But even being retired, I find that

1  
2 the struggle is even harder because everything just  
3 continues to be high. We all want a nice place to  
4 live. It shouldn't be a select few of people that  
5 have that privilege to live in luxury. And it's so  
6 pitiful. When you drive around Queens, Brooklyn,  
7 you find all these high-rise buildings that are  
8 literally empty. Why is that? Because you have  
9 greedy slumdog landlords that don't want to give  
10 affordable housing to people like you and me.

11 All right? So if you really want  
12 to take things into consideration, if you have any  
13 sense of decency and humanity, you really should  
14 look for the interest of people that keep the city  
15 going, which is elderly people like us that are  
16 paid our dues or pay taxes. Young people that have  
17 three young children that are doing the right  
18 thing, but they can't afford New York, right?  
19 Because the rent is so high. I'm sure most of you  
20 are parents and maybe you have endowments for your  
21 children. Not all of us can afford that, right?  
22 Yeah.

23 So I say this to say that, please,  
24 for once, have a conscience do things right by  
25 people, by the faces that you see here. We are

1

2 fighting for 90 million New Yorkers that live here,  
3 right? Give us a fair chance in life to succeed.  
4 Let us have some kind of quality of life and enjoy  
5 to live in this city. All right? That's all I  
6 want to say.

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.  
8 I want to go back to Kung Heyung see if she's here.

9

MS. HEYUNG: All right.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Hold on. Hold  
11 on, ma'am.

12

MS. HEYUNG: Yes. Those are all,  
13 all the rest of the names that are registered to  
14 speak are names from our tenants here.

15

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay?

16

MS. HEYUNG: We've decided to do a  
17 collective shared testimony. So we're going to  
18 start doing that now.

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay? Okay.

20

MS. HEYUNG: So every year we have  
21 tenants in every borough coming up to testify about  
22 the financial hardship that's faced by all tenants  
23 in rent-regulated housing. We have people coming  
24 up to testify about the explosion of evictions and  
25 homelessness. This year too, we heard a lot of

1

2 moving testimonies from people in this room about  
3 the hardship that they're facing, and yet we know  
4 that none of this matters to the board.

5

6 We know that this year this board  
7 has said again for the fourth consecutive time that  
8 they're going to raise the rent for more than 2  
9 million rent-stabilized tenants. So this year now  
10 we are done testifying. We know that our  
11 testimonies are not changing anything. We know  
12 that you all have already made your decision.

13

14 You are all here pretending to  
15 listen to us because you have to be. So now we  
16 will be going in order, we will be reading a single  
17 shared testimony, not to the board, but to everyone  
18 else in this room.

19

(Audience participation.)

20

21 MS. HUYEN: Rather than telling  
22 the board how much we're suffering, only to see  
23 them bored, distracted, sleeping, completely  
24 unmoved. We're here to take a shared stand and a  
25 vote of no confidence in this board.

26

27 After all, why should these  
28 people, this board, who we didn't even elect, who  
29 has no idea what it's like to struggle to make



1

2 rent, who at best have no stake in this at all,  
3 choose how much our rent should go up? That our  
4 rent should go up year after year after year. We  
5 know that what we really need is a true system of  
6 rent control. And this is a shame.

7 So we're here to stand together  
8 against this undemocratic and unjust system. Let's  
9 tell the board, let's tell each other, we have no  
10 confidence in this system and we need a new one.  
11 Thank you. All right.

12 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

13 MS. HEYUNG: Now, I'm going to  
14 invite all of the tenants here to come up and speak  
15 one by one and share our testimony to the board, to  
16 everyone in this room.

17 MR. HENARA: Good evening,  
18 everyone. My name is Orlando Henara (phonetic). I  
19 live at (unintelligible) in a rent-stabilized  
20 building. I could tell you about the hardship I'm  
21 facing, that the rent in the city is too high and  
22 that I can't even afford the rent that I'm paying  
23 -- that I'm paying now, let alone another increase.  
24 I could tell you that the rent increases every year  
25 and my income doesn't. Year after year, in every

1

2     borough, we share our stories, we express our  
3     concerns. The Rent Guidelines Board doesn't care.  
4     They have responded year after year with a rent  
5     increase.

6                     Rent stabilization is meant to  
7     ensure housing remains affordable. Not to protect  
8     the profits in the package of the landlords and  
9     continue to see from wealth from the working class  
10    to the rich. A rent freeze is the bare minimum  
11    that we need, and this board is not even willing to  
12    consider it. Landlord profits are up to 12  
13    percent. It's common sense that owning property in  
14    New York City means that you don't -- that you  
15    don't need help.

16                    Meanwhile, 2.4 million  
17    rent-stabilized tenants are suffering. We are not  
18    getting any new services and we are not getting  
19    paid anymore. We know that when landlords raise  
20    the rent, it goes straight to lining their pockets  
21    not to fixing our homes. But the Board's main  
22    concern is still for the landlords that are making  
23    a lot of money. We have nothing, and they are  
24    worried about protecting some investment.

25                    So this year I will choose not to

1

2 share my stories with the board. Instead, I join  
3 others in this room, the rent-stabilized tenants of  
4 Queens to declare my loss of confidence in the RGB,  
5 and declare that this board in this process is a  
6 sham.

7

We see and condemn your  
8 willingness to protect landlord interests over  
9 preserving the quality of life of New Yorkers.

10 That's why we are here to say that the board and  
11 the whole process is a shame. The RGB is a sham.

12

(Audience Participation.)

13

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

14

MR. HENARA: So let's keep -- so  
15 let's keep united and fight for our rights of  
16 housing.

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I would ask -- I  
18 would ask, sir -- please wait one second, please.  
19 Many of your neighbors have signed up dutifully to  
20 speak, and I really would ask that you give them  
21 the respect of allowing them to do so.

22

FEMALE VOICE 1: We're not the  
23 ones who are disrespectful.

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: By not giving  
25 your neighbors the chance. So I like to call

1

2 Carlos Ortiz. Carlos Ortiz. Carlos Ortiz, please.

3 MR. ORTIZ: Yeah, that's me.

4 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Are you Carlos

5 Ortiz?

6 MR. ORTIZ: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay.

8 MR. ORTIZ: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN APPLE: You are welcome  
10 to speak, sir.11 MR. ORTIZ: But we are going to do  
12 this our way, not the way you tell us to do it. So  
13 Sandra's going to read to you in Spanish and you're  
14 going to try to pretend to pay some attention even  
15 though it's not your language, right, Sandra?16 MS. SANDRA: Good evening,  
17 everyone. So my name is Sandra. And I live in a  
18 building that's rent state -- Well, I actually live  
19 in a house that's -- it's a little bit different  
20 and they're raising our rent 30 to 50 percent. I  
21 have a question. Do you know when was the last  
22 time our income went up?23 I can tell you all the  
24 difficulties that I'm experiencing. Rent in the  
25 city is too high and I can't even pay it. I can't

1

2 pay the rent that I pay now, and definitely not an  
3 increase to it. I can definitely tell you my rent  
4 increases every year, but my income does not. Year  
5 after year, in every borough, we share our stories,  
6 we tell the RGB our complaints and our situations,  
7 and you don't care.

8 And year after year, your response  
9 is an increase in the rent. Your purpose is to  
10 guarantee is for housing to continue to be  
11 affordable. It's not to protect the landlord's  
12 profits and keep deviating like the riches -- of  
13 like the working class or the money of the working  
14 class to the rich.

15 The minimum thing we need now is a  
16 rent freeze. This board is not even willing to  
17 take it into consideration. The landlord's profits  
18 have increased by 12 percent. It's clear that to  
19 be a landlord in the city of New York, you don't  
20 really need help, but we do, the community does.

21 Meanwhile, 2.4 million tenants in  
22 rent-stabilized apartments are suffering. We don't  
23 receive any type of service or services, and we  
24 don't make the same income. We know that when the  
25 property -- when the landlords get their money,

1

2     their rent, basically, it just goes straight to  
3     their pockets, it's not even used to make repairs.  
4     But the main concern of the board is for the  
5     landlords to continue making a profit.

6                     We don't have anything, and you  
7     don't even care to protect us. So this year I have  
8     chosen to not share my story with the board, but I  
9     unite with other people that are in this room with  
10    the tenants of rent-stabilized apartments in  
11    Queens, in order to express my lack of trust or  
12    confidence in you all, lack of confidence in the  
13    RGB. And to state that this board and this process  
14    is a farce.

15                    We see and we condemn your  
16    interest in protecting landlords, instead of  
17    protecting New Yorkers' quality of life. Please,  
18    listen to us and take us into consideration. Good  
19    night.

20                    (Audience participation.)

21                    CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. I  
22    believe that Anwar Kunkir is back in the room.  
23    I've been told.

24                    FEMALE VOICE 1: Yes.

25                    CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please.

1

2

FEMALE VOICE 1: Excuse me.

3

4

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Mr. Kunkir,  
please come up. I think we'll have a translation,  
sir. You'll -- thank you. Thank you.

6

7

8

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13

MR. KUNKIR: Basically, I'm a  
Bengali-spoken person, so instead of English, I'm  
trying to read my testimony in Bengali. My name is  
Anwar Kunkir. I live in Jamaica at a Zara  
building. I could tell you about the hardships I'm  
facing, that the rent in the city is too high, and  
that I can't even afford the rent that I'm paying  
now, let alone another increase.

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So I could tell you that the rent  
increases every year and my income does not. Years  
after years, in every borough we share our stories.  
So we express our concerns years after years, but  
the rent guidelines board does not care. Well, the  
board has responded years after years, but with the  
rent increase rent civilization. Rent civilization  
is meant to ensure housing remains affordable. Not  
to protect the profits in the pockets of landlords  
and to continue the chiffon vault from the working  
class to the rich.

25

So a rent freeze is the bare

1

2 minimum that we need, and this board is not even  
3 willing to consider it. Landlords' profits are up  
4 to 12 percent. It is common sense that owning  
5 property in New York City means that you do not  
6 need help. So meanwhile, 2.4 million  
7 rent-stabilized tenants are suffering. We are not  
8 getting any new services and we are not getting  
9 paid anymore.

10 We know that when landlords raise  
11 their rent, it goes straight to lining their  
12 pockets, not to fixing up our homes. To my  
13 understanding, it is clear that the board's main  
14 concern is still for the landlords that are making  
15 lots of lots of money. We have nothing. We, the  
16 tenants, have nothing and they are worried about  
17 protecting some investments.

18 So this year I will choose not to  
19 share my stories with the board anymore. Instead,  
20 I join others, other tenants in this room, the  
21 rent-stabilized tenants of Queens to declare my  
22 loss of confidence in the RGB. And I declare that  
23 this board and this process is a sham. We see and  
24 condemn your willingness to protect landlord  
25 interest over preserving the quality of life of New



1

2     Yorkers. That is why we're here today to say that  
3     the board and the whole process is a sham.

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Anaka Herrera  
5     (phonetic). Let's, please. Anaka Herrera -- are  
6     you Anaka?

7

FEMALE VOICE 2: My name is  
8     (unintelligible) and I live at Flushing, Queens, in  
9     a rental stabilized building. I could tell you  
10    about the hardship I'm facing, that the rent in the  
11    city is too high and I can't even afford the rent  
12    I'm paying now, let alone another increase. I  
13    could tell you that the rent increases every year  
14    and my income does not. Year after year, in every  
15    borough, we share our stories, we express our  
16    concerns. The Rent Guideline Board does not care.  
17    They have responded year after year with our rent  
18    increase. Rent stabilizer is meant to ensure  
19    housing remains affordable, not to protect the  
20    profits in the pockets of landlords and continue to  
21    sip wealth from the working classes to the rich.

22

A rent freeze is a bare minimum  
23    that we need and this board is not even willing to  
24    consider it. Landlord profits up to 12 percent.  
25    It's common sense that owning property in New York

1

2 City means that you do not need help. Meanwhile,  
3 2.5 million rent-stabilized tenants are suffering  
4 while not getting any new services, while not  
5 getting paid anymore.

6 We know that when landlords raise  
7 the rent, it goes straight to lying in their  
8 pockets, not to fix our home. Ironically, the  
9 board's main concern for them is still the  
10 landlords that are making more money. We have  
11 nothing, and we are worried about, and they are  
12 still worried about protecting their rights and  
13 their investments.

14 So this year I will choose not to  
15 share my stories with the board. Instead, I join  
16 others in this room, the rent-stabilized tenant of  
17 Queens, to declare my loss of confidence in the  
18 RGB, and declare that this board and this process  
19 is a sham. We see and condemn your willingness to  
20 protect landlords over preserving the quality of  
21 the life of New Yorkers. This is why we are here  
22 to say that the board and the whole process is a  
23 sham. The RGB is a sham.

24 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.  
25 Thank you. Anthony Edwara (phonetic). Anthony

1

2 Edwara.

3

4 FEMALE VOICE 3: This board has  
5 increased the rents every year since it came  
6 together --

7

8 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ma'am, are you  
9 Anthony?

10

11 FEMALE VOICE 3: There will no  
12 longer be tenants who can afford to live in  
13 rent-stabilized departments if this board and  
14 administration continue to raise rents like this.  
15 Or maybe that's what they want. Today, the NY  
16 Apartments Association, which is made up of owners  
17 of rent-stabilized buildings, just announced that  
18 they are going to spend \$2.5 million to try to get  
19 Cuomo elected.

20 They claim they have no money to  
21 do repairs, but have now become the single big-ass  
22 donors in the major race just so they can keep  
23 getting higher rent increases. Coincidentally, it  
24 seems this board, those people sitting up there  
25 have been helping them realize the same purpose in  
the name of law.

26

27 Every year the board analyzes  
28 landlord costs and every year it ignores pending

1

2 costs. Why? Because that is all that is required  
3 of them by the law.

4

Every year the board hosts  
5 hearings in every borough. Why? Not to listen to  
6 tenants, but again, because it is required of them  
7 by the law. It is a farce, and we all know it by  
8 now.

9

In the history of the RGB, no  
10 matter the data, no matter the circumstances, the  
11 result is always the same. Operating income is  
12 down, rent increase; operating income is up, rent  
13 increase; insurance costs are low, rent increase;  
14 insurance costs are high, rent increase; vacancies  
15 are up, rent increase; vacancies are down, rent  
16 increase.

17

In fact, rent in NYC have gone up  
18 200 percent more than operations costs since the  
19 RGB was established. In the same time period, the  
20 real minimum wage has decreased by nearly half. If  
21 the RGB was actually made to preserve  
22 affordability, tenants would be looking at rent  
23 rollbacks not increases our demand for rent freeze  
24 is the bare minimum and that's why we're here today  
25 to say that the board and the whole process is a

1

2 sham.

3

4 You will go back to your non-rent  
5 stabilized housing tonight, complain about your  
6 boring, prestigious duty of sitting through another  
7 hearing, but know that, carry this feeling with  
8 you, that we are, the tenants are rising up, and  
9 know that we are shutting you down, and the big  
10 landlords and real estate's land developers behind  
11 you, everything you are standing on.

12 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Yeah.  
13 Thank you. Horge. Horge.

14 FEMALE VOICE 1: Anthony is going  
15 to speak. You were concerned about it earlier. So  
16 we're going to have the same shared testimony in  
17 alternating languages. You called Anthony before  
18 and he'll speak now. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Anthony. Thank  
20 you, sir.

21 MR. EDWARA: Okay. All right.  
22 Hello everyone. My name is Anthony and I live at  
23 Richmond Hill in Rent State -- in a rent-stabilized  
24 building. I could tell you about the hardships I'm  
25 facing that I'm facing that my fathers are -- that  
my father is facing, that the rent is in the city

1

2 is too high, and that I can't even afford rent that  
3 I'm paying now, let alone another increase. I  
4 could tell you that the rent increases every year  
5 and my income does not, nor does my father's.

6 (Readings in foreign languages.)

7 CHAIRMAN APPLE: I'm going to read  
8 out every name that I have here because I want to  
9 make sure that everybody who signed up gets to  
10 speak before -- so I'm going to read these names.  
11 If your name comes up, please feel free to come up.

12 MALE VOICE 2: You called on  
13 Anthony earlier and Anthony has a right to finish.

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay. Let me  
15 read the name and we'll let Anthony finish. Give  
16 me one second, sir.

17 THE INTERPRETER: (Translating  
18 from English to Spanish.)

19 Shia Yung (phonetic), Ramon Mendez  
20 (unintelligible), Damon Chen, Orlando Henaya  
21 (phonetic).

22 FEMALE VOICE 1: He's right there.

23 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please come up,  
24 sir, you'll be next. Rain Riley, Dakota Rylander,  
25 Wanda Martinez, Debbie Lord, Classy Garcia

1

2 (phonetic). If I read your name, please come up,  
3 line up and we'll make sure everybody gets to  
4 speak.

5 MR. ANTHONY: All right. Year  
6 after year in every borough, we share our stories.  
7 We express our concerns. The Rent Guidelines Board  
8 doesn't care. They have responded year after year  
9 with a rent increase. Rent stabilization is meant  
10 to ensure housing remains affordable, not to  
11 protect the profits and the pockets of landlords  
12 and continue to siphon wealth from the working  
13 class to the rich. A rent freeze is the bare  
14 minimum that we need, and this board is not even  
15 willing to consider it.

16 Landlords' profits are up 12  
17 percent. Its common sense that owning property in  
18 New York City means that you do not need help.  
19 Meanwhile, 2.4 million rent-stabilized tenants are  
20 suffering. We're not getting any new services and  
21 we're not getting paid anymore. We know that when  
22 landlords raise the rent, it goes straight to  
23 lining their pockets not to fix up our homes, but  
24 the board's -- but the board's main concern is  
25 still for the landlords that are making lots of

1

2 money. We have nothing, and they're worried about  
3 protecting some investments.

4

5 So this year I will choose not to  
6 share my stories with the board. Instead, I choose  
7 to join the others in this room, the  
8 rent-stabilized tenants of Queens, to declare my  
9 loss of confidence in the RGB and declare that this  
10 board and this process is a sham. We see and  
11 condemn your willingness to protect landlord  
12 interest over preserving the quality of life of New  
13 Yorkers. That's why we're here today to say that  
14 the board and the whole process is a sham. The RGB  
15 is a sham.

16

(Audience participation.)

17

18 MS. YUNG: The Rent-Guidelines  
19 board is a threat to the people. When rents rise,  
20 homelessness rises, and when homelessness rises,  
21 what does the city do? It criminalizes it.  
22 Sleeping on a train, you're arrested. Seeking  
23 shelter in a park, harassed by the cops. Unable to  
24 pay rent, evicted, then funneled into a system  
25 designed to punish poverty with imprisonment.  
Good, I want to make sure you're all looking at me.

26

In New York, homelessness grew



1

2 over 50 percent from January 2023 to January 2024.  
3 That is more than four times the rest of the  
4 nation. We saw a 23 percent spike in evictions in  
5 the city. And these aren't just numbers, these are  
6 our neighbors, our friends, our communities being  
7 pushed to the brink because the rent keeps going  
8 up.

9 This is me on my way to urology  
10 this morning seeing an eviction notice literally  
11 today on my door, discussing how I'm going to take  
12 some part of my fucking bowel and turn it into a  
13 new place for me to pee out of my belly button and  
14 then not knowing where I'm going to have surgery  
15 and recover. What do I tell the doctors? What  
16 would you do?

17 And who is primarily being pushed  
18 out of the city, out of Queens? It's the same  
19 people who are under attack across this country.  
20 Immigrants, black and brown families, the working  
21 class. And while the Trump administration  
22 demonizes immigrants and strips away protections  
23 while they criminalize poverty and gut social  
24 services, the Adams administration is putting a  
25 target on the backs of the very same communities by

1

2 raising the rents and kicking people out of their  
3 homes.

4 38 human beings have died in the  
5 hellhole of Rikers under Mayor Adam's watch. I'm  
6 sure you've heard of this. These aren't separate  
7 crises; they're the same machine grinding poor in  
8 working-class people, again, disproportionately  
9 black, brown, and immigrants into the dust. And  
10 who profits? The landlord sitting on the board in  
11 front of you, the ones Doug Apple represents.

12 This board is directly responsible  
13 for the evictions, the imprisonment, and the deaths  
14 of every single person pushed out of a  
15 rent-stabilized apartment onto the streets because  
16 they couldn't make rent. Every single person who  
17 lost their job, whose families members got sick or  
18 who couldn't keep up when the wages didn't increase  
19 while their rent just kept going up year after  
20 year. Enough is enough. That's why we're here  
21 today to say to the board that this whole process  
22 is a what?

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MS. YUNG: It's a sham. Thank  
25 you.

1

2

(Audience participation.)

3

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ma'am, ma'am,  
please, ma'am.

5

MS. LORD: Yes, Debbie Lord.

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

7

MS. LORD: Thanks to Google, I see  
that the definition for rent-stabilized means  
system of rent regulation where rent increases are  
limited by a percentage determined by the Rent  
Guidelines Board. This protects tenants from  
excessive rent hikes, and typically includes the  
right to renew their lease." Well, we don't feel  
protected.

15

Rent guideline board members and  
Mayor Eric Adams who appointed you, my love for New  
York is waning because of the pricing out of low,  
low, middle, and middle-income earners, individuals  
have to be roommates with sometimes four to five  
people in order to have somewhere to live.

21

Single-income households are on the brink of losing  
their apartments.

23

Let's break down the standard  
financial outputs of all households. Rent,  
healthcare, groceries, wireless utilities,

25

1

2 commuting costs, miscellaneous expenses, such as  
3 laundry that is also increasing and skyrocketing.  
4 New York already has an out-of-control housing  
5 crisis with these exorbitant ongoing rent  
6 increases, the housing will -- the housing crisis  
7 will balloon to a staggering level. What a shame.

8

(Audience participation.)

9

MS. LORD: This reverse Robinhood  
10 is increased of increased rent to enrich the rich  
11 is shameful. Shameful. Including the repeated MCI  
12 charges for capital improvement also increase --  
13 that also increases the rent. So the tenant signs  
14 a lease agreement, then here comes the MCI charges  
15 added on. May God Almighty in heaven guide your  
16 conscience as you make this decision about  
17 increased rents. And I pray, I pray, that you all  
18 have some conscience about where you live in  
19 comparison to where we are living and for what we  
20 are paying. And I hope most of all that your  
21 conscience will be your guide when you look  
22 yourselves in the mirror tonight and make this  
23 decision.

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

25

FEMALE VOICE 4: (Speaking in

1

2 foreign language.)

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We want to make  
sure everybody gets to speak. So we please would  
ask that you try to keep yourselves to two minutes  
approximately if you can, ma'am.

7

FEMALE 5: (Speaking in foreign  
language.)

9

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you very  
much, ma'am. Thank you.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

MS. MARTINEZ: Good evening. My  
name is Wanda Martinez, and I live on 9416 34th  
Road in Jackson Heights. I could tell you about  
hardships I'm facing and that the rent in the city  
is too high and that I can't afford the rent that  
I'm paying now, let alone another increase. I  
could tell you that the rent increases every year  
and that my income does not.

20

Year after year, in every borough,  
we share our stories, we express our concerns. The  
Rent Guideline Board doesn't care. They have  
responded year after year with a rent increase.

24

Rent stabilization is meant to  
ensure housing remains affordable, not to protect

1

2 the profits in the pockets of the landlords and  
3 continue to siphon the wealth from the working  
4 class to the rich. A rent freeze is the bare  
5 minimum that we need, and this board is not even  
6 willing to consider it.

7

Landlord profits are up 12  
8 percent. It's common sense that owning property in  
9 New York City means that you do not need help.  
10 Meanwhile, 2.4 million rent-stabilized tenants are  
11 suffering. We're not getting any new services,  
12 we're not getting paid anymore. We know that when  
13 landlords raise the rent, it goes straight to  
14 lining their pockets and not to fixing up our  
15 homes. But the board's main concern is still for  
16 the landlords that are making lots of money. We  
17 have nothing, and they're worried about protecting  
18 some investments?

19

So this year I will choose not to  
20 share my story, even though I came with it and join  
21 others in this room, rent-stabilized tenants of  
22 Queens, to declare my loss of confidence in the RGB  
23 and to declare that this board and its process is a  
24 sham. We see and condemn your willingness to  
25 protect landlord interest over preserving the

1

2     quality of life of New Yorkers. That is why we are  
3     here today to say that the board and the whole  
4     process is a sham. The RGB is a sham. Housing is  
5     a human right, fight, fight, fight, housing. It's  
6     a human right.

7

(Audience participation.)

8

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank  
9     you, ma'am. Any other speakers who have signed up?  
10    Yes, sir?

11

MR. LOPEZ: My name is Jose Lopez,  
12    and I live in the buildings in Queens. We're  
13    telling you how difficult it is for us to pay what  
14    we have to pay. And they know it because we can  
15    barely afford rent and he's tired of everything.  
16    And in New York, we all have the right to live in  
17    dignified housing. A clean and affordable housing.  
18    That means that the owner of the building has to  
19    make the repairs that the building needs, has to  
20    provide heating, has to provide water, has to  
21    provide all the things that they need and they're  
22    already paying for that. This means that there's a  
23    responsibility from the landlord to do what's  
24    right.

25

When they're trying to increase

1  
2 rent, the first thing that they should think first  
3 is on the well-being of all the tenants. And the  
4 RGB, the people up here. They should be in charge  
5 to make sure that every tenant is represented here.  
6 That every tenant has what they are asking for, and  
7 all the tenants that are here, we have to make them  
8 do what's right to make sure that every tenant in  
9 New York City should have affordable housing,  
10 should have the things that they deserve.

11 We didn't get here just to  
12 complain, we came here to make sure that they do  
13 their job, which is to say, make sure that every  
14 tenant has what they need and not just stay with  
15 their faces. That they don't care that we come  
16 here year after year and they don't do nothing. We  
17 came here to make sure that we fight for what's  
18 right.

19 Do you compromise yourself to make  
20 sure that the tenant's interest is represented to  
21 fight for tenants rates or are you just going to  
22 sit there and increase rent? Because it's not we  
23 just came to lose time and we have to elect people  
24 that actually put the interest of tenants here  
25 because otherwise, they're going to continue the



1

2 same thing that they do year after year.

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank  
4 you, sir. Thank you.

5

(Audience participation.)

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ma'am, please.  
7 Please, ma'am. Thank you. Please, ma'am.

8

FEMALE VOICE 4: (Speaking in a  
9 foreign language.) I could tell you about my  
10 ceiling that's peeling and has been for years.  
11 Just today there was brown water coming out of the  
12 sink. (Speaking in foreign language.) Sorry, I  
13 need a minute. Hold on. (Speaking in foreign  
14 language.)

15

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Take your time.

16

FEMALE VOICE 4: Okay. Give me  
17 the English one.

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.  
19 Oh, we have I think two more speakers who've been  
20 waiting very patiently.

21

FEMALE VOICE 4: Okay, I'm almost  
22 done. I'm almost done.

23

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please, please,  
24 please let her finish.

25

FEMALE VOICE 4: Okay. We're not

1

2 getting any new services and we're not getting paid  
3 anymore. We know that when landlords raise the  
4 rent, it goes straight to lining their pockets, not  
5 to fixing up our homes. But the board's main  
6 concern is still for the landlords that are making  
7 lots of money. We have nothing and they're worried  
8 about protecting some investments.

9 So this year I will choose not to  
10 share my stories with the board and instead I join  
11 others in the room to the rent stabilized tenants  
12 of Queens to declare my loss of confidence in the  
13 RGB and declare that this board and process is a  
14 sham.

15 We see and condemn your  
16 willingness to protect landlord interests over  
17 preserving the quality of life of New Yorkers.  
18 That's why we're here today to say that the board  
19 and the whole process is a sham. The RGB is a  
20 sham.

21 (Audience Participation.)

22 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

23 Ma'am, I believe there are two people who have not  
24 spoken at all. So I would ask that you give them  
25 the opportunity to speak first.

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MS. RILEY: We already have a plan and we're almost done. So just bear with me because I want to talk about my building. Sounds good?

Good evening. My name is Rain Riley (phonetic). I'm a member of the Met Council on Housing, the New York State Tenant Block. I'm a member of Caring Majority Rising. And I'm the founder of my building's tenant union. I've lived at 140-1630 Fourth Avenue in Flushing for two years now in Queens for 10 years. And due to the absurd rent hikes and unethical harassment towards my neighbors, I started the tenant union because my building has 155 units, but half of them are just a revolving door scam.

I'm here today, of course, to demand a rent freeze because I already can't afford the current rent, and I'm constantly in eviction court despite repeatedly working myself back into the hospital. The stress of always being homeless while in a wheelchair is overwhelming. The accessible units are hoarded by greedy bastards like y'all who don't even use them. Is it worth it? You know, watching us die on the streets? And

1

2 if it's worth it to you, what the fuck is it wrong  
3 with you?

4 My landlords do not need more  
5 money. They have 20 buildings and a mall, but they  
6 live in Long Island, but I've never met them. They  
7 don't provide basic warranty of ability  
8 accommodations. They lie about stabilization  
9 status with no repercussions. They harass the  
10 older tenants and the immigrant tenants straight  
11 out of the building. They steal HRA payments and  
12 lie until forced to admit it by the court. This  
13 all happened to me too. The HRA, they lied about  
14 the fucking rent-stabilization status of my unit  
15 too until the court forced them to admit it. And  
16 now they lied to the court saying that I have  
17 section eight while evicting me so they can keep  
18 getting more free fucking money.

19 They actively take down any  
20 union-organizing signage while retaliating fiercely  
21 against the members and have raised the rent by 400  
22 dollars each year for long-term tenants since 2022.  
23 In just a few years, the remaining stabilized units  
24 in my building went from 24 to nine. And if they  
25 succeeded in evicting me this month, it's going to

1

2 be eight.

3

4 When the gas was out for five  
5 months in 2023, they gave each unit one hot plate,  
6 sued everybody who withheld the correct rebate  
7 amount, and then came and took the hot plates back.  
8 You know I can't even afford my MiraLax, my  
9 girlfriend has to buy it for me. Like each one of  
10 you board members, as I said before, holds our  
11 lives in your hands. And I really need you to  
12 understand that. You may not remember us in a  
13 year, but I know for sure I'm going to remember  
14 you. We need a rent freeze right now and we're  
15 ready, we're organized, and we're mobilized to vote  
16 the leaches out. Thank you again.

16

(Audience participation.)

17

18 MS. JEFFERS: (Speaking in foreign  
19 language.)

19

20 MR. OSLING: I'm Doug Osling,  
(unintelligible) tenant in Queens.

21

22 MS. JEFFERS: Doug Apple climbs to  
23 one balance. Alexander Armlovich talks about need  
24 to follow the data. Let's talk about the data.  
25 This year, landlords' income went up to 12 percent,  
the highest jump since 1990. Landlords are doing

1

2 better than ever. Well, one in four New Yorkers  
3 can't afford the basics. Since 2019, requirement  
4 rents have rise by an average of 11 percent. In  
5 the same period, the RGB has rise rent  
6 stabilizations by guess how much? 11 percent last  
7 year.

8 From October '23 to '24, the media  
9 has ran a New York series rise 2.7 percent. Let's  
10 guess what the board decide was an appropriate  
11 increase the rent stabilization apartments, even  
12 more than three to five percent. This year in the  
13 outdoor boroughs, new tenants and  
14 rent-stabilization units have even higher rents  
15 than long-term tenants and unregulated units. Does  
16 any of these sound like rent stabilization to you?  
17 No. And this is part of our rent going up and up  
18 and up. Are we as tenants seeing any repairs? No.

19 The vacancies there is in a  
20 history law. The RGB doesn't care. Nearly 60  
21 percent of the tenants are paying a third part of  
22 their income in rent and many are paying half of  
23 their income and to rent. (Unintelligible.) There  
24 is a financial assistance program for landlords who  
25 can provide hardship and even year and every year,

1

2 less than 10 landlords in New York City, apply to  
3 Arpit Gupta, doesn't care.

4

5 Rents in New York have gone up to  
6 a hundred percent more than an operation cost since  
7 1968. And in the same -- at the same time, the  
8 period, the real minimum wage hasn't decreased by  
9 nearly half. Alice Smyth doesn't care.

10

11 MR. OSLING: That's right. I  
12 think Mr. Schwartz doesn't care because he's  
13 having so much time, trouble staying awake. Most  
14 of the evening, along with most of the rest of you.  
15 And Doug, you don't care either because you  
16 represent many of the biggest sham lords in the  
17 city. Most of you are landlords yourselves. You  
18 are all puppets and pimps of a corrupt and broken  
19 system appointed by a mayor, even more corrupt and  
20 who is also himself a landlord.

21

22 So I hope you enjoy your jobs  
23 because you are about to lose them. The board is  
24 unelected, undemocratic, and completely  
25 unaccountable to we the people who, in theory,  
26 you're supposed to be serving. You are only  
27 serving yourselves. For that reason, you are  
28 illegitimate.

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This is a farce, a fraud, and it's a goddam sham. And we're putting you all on notice. Your time is nearly up. That's why we are here to say that you and what you represent is a total sham. Goodbye.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you very much. Everybody who signed up spoke. So thank you very much. Have a good evening.

(At 8:00 p.m., the public hearing was adjourned.)



1

2 STATE OF NEW YORK )

3 SS.

4 COUNTY OF NEW YORK )

5

6

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I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand

8

(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public within and

9

for the State of New York, do hereby certify that

10

the foregoing pages 1 through 98, taken at the time

11

and place aforesaid, is a true and correct

12

transcription of my shorthand notes.

13

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have

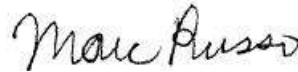
14

hereunto set my name this 16TH day of September,

15

2025.

16



17

-----  
MARC RUSSO

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25

## Concordance

### < Dates >

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