

1

2 THE CITY OF NEW YORK

3 RENT GUIDELINES BOARD

4 -----X

5 PUBLIC MEETING

6 OF THE DIRECTORS

7 -----X

8 June 9, 2025

9 5:00 p.m.

10 NYC College of Technology

11 275 Jay Street

12 Brooklyn, NY 11201

13

14 B E F O R E:

15

16 DOUG APPLE,

17 THE CHAIR

18

19

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21

22

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1

2 APPEARANCES:

3 Board of Directors:

4 Doug Apple - The chair

5 Genesis Aquino

6 Alex Armlovich

7 Robert Ehrlich

8 Arpit Gupta

9 Reed Jordan

10 Alex Schwartz

11 Christina Smyth

12 Adan Soltren

13

14

15

16 S T A F F:

17 Andrew McLaughlin - Executive Director

18 Brian Hoberman - Co-Research Director

19 Danielle Burger - Co-Research Director

20 Charmaine Superville - Office Manager

21

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23

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. And
thank you for your patience. We apologize for the
delay.

6

7

8

I want to welcome you tonight to
the public hearing of the New York City Rent
Guidelines Board, and thank you for all attending.

9

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16

This is the second 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, and September 30th, 2026.

17

18

19

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

Genesis Aquino.

20

MS. AQUINO: Present.

21

22

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Alec
Armlovich.

23

MR. ARMLOVICH: Present.

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Robert Ehrlich.

25

MR. EHRICH: Present.

1

2

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Arpit Gupta.

3

MR. GUPTA: Present.

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Reed Jordan.

5

MR. JORDAN: Present.

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Alex Schwartz.

7

MR. SCHWARTZ: Present.

8

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Christina Smyth.

9

MS. SMYTH: Present.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Adan Soltren.

11

MR. SOLTREN: Present.

12

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Doug Apple.

13

I am indeed present. Let the record show we have a

14

quorum.

15

The next three meetings of

16

this Board will be public hearings to comment on

17

the proposed guidelines on the following dates and

18

times:

19

June 12th at the main theater

20

of Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse in

21

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

22

June 17th at Symphony Space,

23

2537 Broadway at 95th Street in Manhattan from 5:00

24

to 8:00 p.m.;

25

June 27th, New York City

1

2 Department of Health, 125 Worth Street, 2nd floor,
3 Manhattan, from 10:00 to 12:00 in the morning.

4

5 Anyone who wants to comment on
6 the proposed guidelines at a public hearing must
7 sign up to speak. People wishing to speak at the
8 public hearings can pre-register in advance either
9 through our website at nyc.gov/rgb or by calling
10 (212) 669-7480 from 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through
11 Friday. Preregistration ends at noon on the
12 business day prior to each hearing.

12

13 For those who do not
14 pre-register for the hearings, registration is also
15 available at public hearings from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.
16 on June 12th and 17th and 10:00 to 12:00 p.m. on
17 June 27th.

17

18 All our public hearings will
19 be live-streamed and Spanish interpretation will be
20 provided at each hearing.

20

21 We also accept comments on the
22 proposed guidelines outside of our public hearings.
23 You can submit written audio and video comments for
24 the Board to review through June 27th.

24

25 Instructions on how to submit these comments will
be available on the Board's website or by email

1

2 @askrgbnyc.gov or by calling the RGB at (212)
3 669-7480.

4

Our final vote on the
5 guidelines will take place on Monday, June 30th,
6 starting at 7:00 p.m. at El Museo del Barrio, 1230
7 5th Avenue at 104th Street in Manhattan. Doors
8 will open at 6:00 p.m. The public may attend in
9 person or may watch the vote live by streaming on
10 the RGB's YouTube channel.

11

Before we proceed, I'd like to
12 go over the rules and procedures for those who are
13 testifying before the Board tonight.

14

If you wish to speak, you must
15 confirm with RGB staff at the registration table
16 located near the entrance hall. Speakers will not
17 be called if they have not checked in at the
18 registration table. In doing so, you should fill
19 in one of these yellow forms.

20

There are Spanish interpreters
21 here today. When registering to speak, please
22 notify the staff if you'd like an interpreter.

23

I will try to call several
24 names in advance. We actually have two
25 microphones, one here on our left and one on our

1

2 right. I will be calling up people to each
3 microphone and then asking you to speak one at a
4 time.

5

If you have materials to
6 distribute to the Board, please give them to the
7 RGB staff sitting at the sign-in table near the
8 entrance. I'll attempt to alternate speakers
9 between tenants and owners, but this may not always
10 be possible.

11

In order to accommodate as many
12 speakers as possible, each speaker will be -- have
13 two minutes to give their testimony. Additional
14 two minutes of speaking time will be given to
15 speakers utilizing interpretation.

16

To help speakers keep track of
17 the time, we have a clock. We'll start the clock
18 when you begin speaking. The clock will beep once
19 when the speaker has 30 seconds left and will
20 continue beeping when the allotted two minutes are
21 up. If you are still speaking at the end of two
22 minutes, I'll ask you to quickly wrap up your
23 testimony. We expect many speakers, in fact, we
24 have what? Over 50 already signed up? Right. It
25 looks like 60 to 70 signed up. We want to make

1

2 sure we get to everybody.

3

4 We understand it may be
5 difficult to say everything you want us to hear in
6 the two minutes, but please understand it's our
7 responsibility to try to make sure that everyone
8 who has taken the time to come here and testify
9 will have a fair opportunity to be heard.

9

10 And we also ask everybody to
11 be respectful. We know this is of great
12 importance, but we do ask that you be respectful in
13 your words and actions.

13

14 And we'll have staff available
15 to assist. If you need assistance with the
16 microphone, we'll be able to do so. And if anybody
17 is disabled and cannot come down to the
18 microphones, we'll make sure we bring the
19 microphones up to you if that's needed.

19

20 Thank you for your
21 cooperation, and the Board is looking forward to
22 hearing your comments regarding the proposed rent
23 adjustment guidelines. And with that, we're
24 going to start the hearing.

24

MALE VOICE: No.

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh, I'm

1

2 sorry, we have to do this in Spanish. I apologize.

3 Spanish. Thank you.

4 THE INTERPRETER: (Translating

5 from English to Spanish.)

6 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Great. Thank

7 you very much.

8 I want to -- we have an

9 elected official who is here. I believe the

10 Councilwoman Hanif. Are you here?

11 Please, come to the

12 microphone. Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

13 MS. HANIF: I don't believe

14 this is -- Okay. This is on. Hi everyone. Good

15 evening. And good evening to everyone who will be

16 testifying tonight. I see friends from the 5th

17 Avenue Committee, Neighbors Helping Neighbors. And

18 I'm here to speak on behalf of rent-stabilized

19 tenants who are my constituents.

20 I'm Council member Shahana

21 Hanif. I represent District 39 neighborhoods that

22 include Park Slope, Columbia Waterfront,

23 Kensington, and surrounding areas.

24 We are living in an

25 affordability crisis. Rents have gone up, utility

1

2 costs have gone up, groceries have gone up. Over
3 the last three years, rents have gone up 9 percent
4 as a result of this RGB. It's a shame. Because
5 what that does is fast-track displacement.

6

We're also experiencing a
7 leadership crisis. The RGB right now should be
8 looking for ways to keep New Yorkers safe and
9 housed, not ways to clear a path for an exit from
10 the city they grew up in, they're raising their
11 families in, they work in.

12

So I implore this RGB to
13 consider the multi-crisis that we're living under
14 right now in our city and back tenants.

15

I want to read just a
16 testimony from our comptroller. He says, "This
17 isn't just morally necessary, it's economically
18 feasible. Landlord's net operating -- landlords'
19 net operating income increased by 8 percent even
20 after adjusting for inflation. And with targeted
21 support for distressed buildings, we can stabilize
22 both tenants and owners."

23

So we don't have to do this.
24 Please, I implore that you take urgent -- with
25 urgency that we freeze the rent. That's all.

1

2 Thank you.

3

(Applause.)

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

5

I'm now going to call

6

individuals who've signed up. Please, come over

7

here, or over there, as I indicate. Over here.

8

William Henry. Okay. Mr. Henry. Thank you.

9

Johnny Rivera, if you could come up also. Esteban

10

Giron, all on this side.

11

On this side, I'd like to have

12

Denise Clay, Kyle Sandman, and Moises Hernandez.

13

So if you could come up, and we're going to go one

14

at a time, just so we can make sure everybody gets

15

to speak.

16

So, Mr. Henry, please start

17

with us.

18

MR. HENRY: Good evening,

19

members of the Board. My name is William Henry,

20

and I'm here to speak for the tenants of 101

21

Lincoln Road in Brooklyn. Many of whom are

22

elderly, longstanding rent-stabilized tenants who

23

have watched their homes deteriorate while the

24

building has become a financial windfall for the

25

owner.

1

2

Michael Niamonitakis, that

3

name is important. He owns more than 80 buildings.

4

He bought 101 Lincoln Road in 2006 for \$1.9

5

million. Since 2010, he has refinanced his

6

property three times. In 2023 alone, he secured a

7

loan for \$8.35 million. That's over four times the

8

original purchase price.

9

Where did the money go? It

10

certainly didn't go to the repairs. The building

11

of 83 tenants is plagued by leaks, mold, faulty

12

heat, and chronic maintenance issues.

13

Tenants live in conditions

14

that are inhumane. There's something called the

15

warranty of habitability, and we shouldn't have to

16

live like cows and -- cows and sheep in a barn.

17

(Audience participation.)

18

MR. HENRY: Let's be clear.

19

These loans are not investments in housing; they

20

are financial instruments used as -- used to

21

extract wealth. The law allows this refinancing,

22

but the law does not require this Board to reward

23

them with rent hikes.

24

In 2016, Public Advocate

25

Letitia James held a press conference on our

1

2 doorstep, exposing how landlords use these
3 buildings as ATM machines while neglecting their
4 legal duty to maintain safe habit housing.

5

 The same year, he was ranked
6 number six on the 100 worst landlords in the city.
7 This Board has the power and the responsibility to
8 act in the public interest. Rent increases under
9 these circumstances are not justified. They would
10 reward the landlord who profits through debt while
11 tenants pay the price in broken homes.

12

 We ask you, don't enable this
13 abuse. Don't raise the rent on people who have
14 held their communities together for years, protect
15 them, protect the law, and protect what rent
16 stabilization is meant to do. Thank you.

17

(Applause.)

18

 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,
19 sir.

20

 Johnny Rivera. And I also
21 would like to call up Esteban Giron if he's here.
22 After Mr. Rivera, you can get up there if you'd
23 like, sir. Denise Clay. Denise, you'll be up here
24 next. And then Kyle Sandman.

25

 Okay. So please, Mr. Rivera.

1

2

MR. RIVERA: Good evening, but

3

I don't think it's a good evening. Around this

4

time period, we hear the propaganda of the landlord

5

industry talking about the poor landlord. I hope

6

they brought someone here who has only six units

7

and is really struggling. Because most of these

8

landlords, 50 percent of them, are corporate

9

owners.

10

And so many of them have a lot

11

of money. This is one example, and yet they'll

12

come here and cry poverty to our faces. But we

13

know better, and we need to exert our influence,

14

not here tonight, because this is rigged. You

15

know, don't get on this Board with the exception of

16

the two tenants' reps without having pledged their

17

Allegiance to the landlord industry. So look at

18

their faces.

19

(Applause.)

20

MR. RIVERA: That's who they

21

are. They go home and they live well, while the

22

rest of us struggle as tenants.

23

And this is a very racist act

24

on your part, I'll tell you and your boss, because

25

the people that are facing these problems, most of

1

2 them are Black, Hispanic, and Asian people.

3

4 And thanks to you, they're
5 going to have to decide whether rent money or
6 medical money. They're going to have to decide
7 whether they stay, open up a little business, or
8 they don't open up a little business.

8

9 You know, there's a writer in
10 the Forbes magazine that I read, a guy that I know
11 personally talked about the rate of return and made
12 it sound so interesting. You know, poor landlords,
13 they're not just getting enough, the rent things
14 have gone up, this and that.

14

15 Sure, while their profits may
16 be shrunk, we'll never know because they don't open
17 their books up. But we know that if you are in the
18 business, you are making money. And if you can't
19 be in the business, get out and let us run the
20 buildings. We can certainly do a lot better.

20

(Applause.)

21

22 MR. RIVERA: So this is a
23 facade. It's not real, it's not of substance, but
24 it doesn't stop us from talking to each other.

24

(Applause.)

25

MR. RIVERA: And let us

1

2 remember when the time comes, it is not here, but
3 it's out there, called Election Day, to exert our
4 voices.

5

6 Please, do so, and thank you
7 for your time. Have a great evening.

8

9 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,
10 sir.

11

12 Esteban Giron, please.

13

14 MR. GIRON: Good evening. My
15 name is Esteban Giron. I'm the political director
16 of Tenants PAC and a member of the Crown Heights
17 Tenant Union.

18

19 (Applause.)

20

21 MR. GIRON: Yeah. Two weeks
22 ago, this Board made the unprecedented decision to
23 hold a revote to lower the range on two-year
24 leases. Mayor Adams quickly took credit for the
25 move, but what actually happened was that the chair
made a mistake during the original preliminary vote
and the public members decided to go back and fix
it.

26

27 Rather than own up to that
28 mistake, Chair Doug Apple attempted to use the
29 opportunity to rebrand this board as one that is
30 listening to tenants never actually owning up to a

1

2 mistake that could have upended the lives of
3 thousands of people. Shame on you, Doug.

4

And besides, what is the point
5 of this entire show of a process if the single
6 tenant -- has a single tenant asked for a 3.75
7 percent increase?

8

AUDIENCE: No.

9

MR. GIRON: No, no. Well,
10 tenants in this city are demanding as a rent
11 freeze, but you still aren't listening.

12

Now, most of the folks on this
13 Board, other than our beloved tenant members, don't
14 give a shit about what happens to tenants who are
15 struggling. But there are two newbies here that
16 might be listening to the two new public members,
17 Alex and Reed, you can still shake this whole thing
18 up. Every percentage point you can claim on the
19 lower end is a victory for working-class New
20 Yorkers and will prevent the displacement of
21 hundreds of tenants.

22

The world feels bleak right
23 now, y'all. From Crown Heights to Palestine to LA,
24 working-class people are being forced out of our
25 homes and communities by landlords and politicians

1

2 and bootlickers who do their bidding.

3

(Applause.)

4

MR. GIRON: The two of you

5

could be remembered not for your complicity, but

6

for your humanity. Do right by tenants while you

7

have a chance. And to the rest of the public

8

members, the chair, and the landlord members, may

9

this be the last time any of us have to stand here

10

and look at your smug ass faces again.

11

Because in a couple of weeks,

12

tenants will help elect a mayor whose mandate for a

13

rent freeze will mean we can finally tell you go

14

monsters to go fuck yourselves.

15

Thank you. And by the way, 45

16

-- 25 seconds -- two minutes after we've waited 45

17

minutes here for you people is so disrespectful.

18

You should all be ashamed of yourselves. Thank

19

you.

20

(Applause.)

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

22

Denise Clay and then Kyle

23

Sandman. Over here just to -- Moises Hernandez,

24

Yvonne Hernandez, and Leonard Goodstein.

25

So, Ms. Clay, please.

1

2

MS. CLAY: Good evening. Alec

3

Armlovich and Reed Jordan, I'm Denise Clay, I am a

4

tenant at 287 Prospect Avenue in South Slope.

5

As I understand it, you're

6

both new to the Board this year. Welcome. The

7

others on the Board may try to convince you that a

8

rent increase is necessary. And I'm asking you to

9

please prioritize tenants when making your

10

decision. We're counting on you.

11

My building 287 Prospect

12

Avenue in South Slope, was recently destabilized.

13

Historically, we were a rent-stabilized for

14

middle-income family building. This is no longer

15

the case. Half of our block has been demolished to

16

make way for luxury housing that I'm fairly certain

17

we don't need. Certainly, no one who currently

18

resides in my building could afford to live there.

19

My building is home to

20

multiple social workers, including myself, public

21

school teachers, educators who work for the SUNY

22

and CUNY system, firefighters, many public sector

23

employees, non-profit employees, artists,

24

essentially people that the city needs who are

25

constantly in conversation about whether or not we

1

2 will be able to stay if the rent increases continue
3 as they have.

4

5 Many families in our building
6 send their kids to school down the street. Again,
7 we're a community, if the rent continues to
8 increase at the rate that it has, we'll have to
9 leave the city.

10

11 The owner of our building --
12 we often hear landlords need more money -- the
13 owner of our building, he drives a Bentley, he has
14 a Mercedes, he drives a Land Rover.
15 He currently has seven warehouse units in our
16 recently destabilized building.

17

18 I don't think he's neglecting
19 our building because of lack of funds. He has a
20 history of criminal and fraudulent behavior. He
21 has lied to us tenants. He had us sign illegal
22 riders that didn't share our protections as
23 tenants.

24

25 For all of these reasons and
26 so many more, we are asking you to please do the
27 right thing for tenants. Please, freeze the rent.
28 And for God's sake, let's dig into our humanity.
29 Thank you.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

4

Kyle Sandman.

5

MR. SANDMAN: Hi. Good

6

evening, and thank you for listening. My name is

7

Kyle Sandman and for the past few years, I've been

8

lucky to live in a rent-stabilized unit. I say

9

lucky because not all of my neighbors have been.

10

Our building is currently

11

owned by a management company that are under full

12

closure. They have several open violations in our

13

building and other buildings they own for failing

14

to make necessary structural repairs, ongoing mold

15

and water damage, and major rodent infestations.

16

They did install solar panels on the roof to claim

17

a tax credit, but as the environmental efficiency

18

rating for our building makes clear, they're not

19

actually functional or even plugged in.

20

They also have several open

21

investigations for illegal rent overcharges and for

22

misinforming tenants about the status -- the

23

rent-stabilized status of the building. In fact,

24

my wife and I did not even know the whole building

25

was rent-stabilized until over a year after we

1

2 moved in.

3

4 I ask that the Rent Guidelines
5 Board vote to freeze all rent increases, or at the
6 very least, establish the lowest possible lease
7 adjustments for rent-stabilized units in the coming
8 year.

8

9 Unfortunately, as you've
10 already heard and probably will continue to hear, I
11 doubt my neighbors and I are alone in our
12 experiences. If our rents are currently not going
13 to the required maintenance or even towards
14 mortgage payments, how can any further rent
15 increases be justified?

15

(Applause.)

16

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,
17 sir.

18

I'll call up some more names.
19 Moises Hernandez. Yvonne Hernandez. Leonard
20 Goodstein.

21

MR. HERNANDEZ: Hello,
22 everyone. My name is Moises Hernandez, and I live
23 at Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York. And I've lived
24 in the neighborhood with my family now for 20
25 years. I'm also an active member of Neighbors

1

2 Helping Neighbors and Brooklyn Tenants United.

3

I'm here to ask the Rent

4

Guidelines Board not to increase the rent

5

percentage this year. It is already very difficult

6

for me to pay the rent, as there isn't much work

7

available. The cost of everything is going up, but

8

wages are not. My children are in school and a

9

rent increase would make it even harder for me to

10

cover all of our expenses.

11

Landlords don't make repairs

12

and they say they don't have time to do them. It

13

is nearly impossible to live under these

14

conditions. I love Sunset Park and that is why I'm

15

asking you to freeze the rent. Thank you for

16

listening. Thank you very much. I love you, New

17

York.

18

(Applause.)

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,

20

sir.

21

Yvonne Hernandez. Leonard

22

Goodstein, Nathan Bravo. You can all sort of come

23

up and --

24

MR. GOODSTEIN: I'm Leonard

25

Goodstein. I represent veterans.

1

2

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25

How many up there are
veterans? Are any of you guys veterans? Do you
know what it takes to live on a VA Pension? We
only got a 2 percent raise and you ask more. We
even got -- we're based on the country. We're not
based on New York alone.

I'm Vietnam Vet and 100
percent disabled. Where do we get the money from
when they're squeezing us at the VA takes three
months to get an appointment now? Give me a break
already, man, this is not right. If you want a
civil law, let's do it already --

(Applause.)

MR. GOLDSTEIN: -- because
what you're doing is hurting guys. I'm older than
all of you up there. I'm 77 years old. Two tours
are numb. So you haven't been through what I've
been through. And the landlords, if they can't
afford to fix the building, sell it, the property
is worth more and get the hell out --

(Applause.)

MR. GOLDSTEIN: -- because
it's no reason why they're asking for more money
because they can't use a screwdriver or a tool.

1

2 They want to own a building. Some of them owned
3 the building so long, the Walk Ups and all those
4 buildings, they bought them for peanuts. They're
5 already rich already. Why are you squeezing the
6 people who are suffering? And I got paperwork to
7 prove that (unintelligible) our cost of living
8 raise from the government is 2.5 percent. How do
9 we do it?

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I'm sorry to
12 be so angry, but not why none of you have been in
13 the military. You don't know what we went through.
14 I suffer from post-traumatic stress. I was sprayed
15 with Agent Orange and wounded. What wouldn't you
16 say about that? You're going to throw us in the
17 street to make us homeless?

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Wrong way to
20 do it. Either do something for the vets or get rid
21 of the mayor. We had to kiss the ring of the
22 queen. I don't call him the king. He went there
23 so he wouldn't go to jail. I'm pissed. We don't
24 deserve this. I fought for this country --

25 (Applause.)

1

2

MR. GOLDSTEIN: -- I killed

3

for this country. At least respect us and give us

4

a break, for God's sake. I'm more than

5

three-quarter of a century old. How much longer do

6

I have? And you going to squeeze me?

7

(Applause.)

8

MR. GOLDSTEIN: Go squeeze

9

your toothpaste. Don't squeeze the poor people

10

that are surviving on benefits and pensions for

11

getting wounded?

12

No, it's got to stop. If you

13

want a war, let's do it now. I'm not afraid of

14

nothing. I'm not afraid to die, but no, the

15

landlords didn't want to squeeze the little guy

16

then let them go to the military. Every one of you

17

should have went to the military --

18

MALE VOICE: Yes, tell him.

19

MR. GOLDSTEIN: -- but the

20

poor kids went to the military. That's who was in

21

Vietnam.

22

I'm sorry to be angry, but

23

this is wrong and you guys could fix it. Screw the

24

landlords.

25

(Applause.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,

3

sir

4

Nathan Bravo? Nathan Bravo,

5

please come up, sir.

6

MR. BRAVO: Hello, my name is

7

Nathan Bravo. I live in Brooklyn, Sunset Park. I

8

am a member of Brooklyn Tenants United and

9

Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

10

I just want to ask a quick

11

question to the audience. Who has a younger

12

sibling, cousin or some sort of relative?

13

MALE VOICE: Yes.

14

MR. BRAVO: Now tell me, do

15

you want to see them succeed? Do you want to see

16

them live their dream and make happy memories?

17

AUDIENCE: Yes.

18

MR. BRAVO: Well, tell the

19

people that are up there sitting and already

20

ruining their dreams. Let me tell you that they

21

have a lot to live for and they have all of -- so

22

many potentials. They have many hobbies. And you

23

know what? They all have in common? Money. Money

24

is the problem right now. It makes people greedy

25

and lose empathy. These kids have dreams and

1

2 they're struggling to achieve them because they
3 keep raising the rent.

4

I want to play football in my
5 future, but it looks like I possibly can't do that.
6 And probably these other kids won't be able to do
7 that too, because their parents are at work to have
8 to roof over their head.

9

You treat us like specks of
10 dust thinking that we can't just make us disappear.
11 Well, we won't because dust can come back if you
12 don't take care of your environment.

13

I am Nathan Bravo from
14 Brooklyn Sunset Park, and I am asking you to freeze
15 the rent. Thank you.

16

(Applause.)

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

18

Nora Huertero, Camilla Sosa,
19 Eliarsar Cano (phonetic), Alondra -- sorry,
20 Tolentino.

21

If can -- if you're -- if your
22 name was called, please feel free to come up to one
23 of the two mics and we'll get going.

24

MS. HUERTERO: Good afternoon.

25

My name is Nora Huertero and I live in Sunset Park.

1

2 I'm a member of Brooklyn Tenants United and an
3 active member of Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

4

5 This hearing is meant for us
6 to express why we oppose the rent increase, but
7 honestly, I don't understand why it feels like the
8 decision to raise the rent was already made before
9 you even listened to us.

9

10 I've spent years coming here
11 asking for the same thing, do not raise the rent.
12 I've spent years coming here asking for the same
13 thing, do not raise the rent. We're told that the
14 increases are for repairs, but we don't even have
15 the basics. No hot water, no heat, no pest control
16 for cockroaches and rats, and no repairs for what's
17 broken.

17

18 So why raise the rent if we're
19 still living under these conditions? What more can
20 we do? We work so hard and now we're paying 50
21 percent more for food.

21

22 Many of us barely have time to
23 say goodnight to our own children. Personally,
24 I've missed my kids' school plays and special
25 moments because I have to work so much. When will
26 you finally listen to us? When will you put your

1

2 hand on your heart and do the right thing?

3

No more increases. Freezing

4

the rent is the right thing to do. Thank you.

5

(Applause.)

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: All right.

7

Thank you.

Camilla Sosa.

8

MS. SOSA: Yeah.

9

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please.

10

MS. SOSA: Good afternoon,

11

members of the RGB. Thank you for your time. My

12

name is Camilla Sosa. I'm a first-generation

13

college student, attendant organizer, and a proud

14

daughter of a hardworking immigrant mother in

15

Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

16

(Applause.)

17

MS. SOSA: I'm here because my

18

mother taught me that when landlords try to break

19

you, you fight back. When they harass you, you

20

organize. And when they tell you this city isn't

21

yours, you remind them that we built it.

22

(Applause.)

23

MS. SOSA: My landlord

24

neglected my mom for years. My mom would beg for

25

repairs to clear out the mold, the pests, the leaks

1

2 in the -- in our bathroom ceiling and she never
3 once cared. We never once missed a month of rent,
4 yet she couldn't do the bare minimum to give us an
5 adequate home. We knew she wasn't living like
6 this. So why should we?

7 And because of her ignorance,
8 I was diagnosed with severe asthma. I spent weeks
9 in the hospital, but she didn't care. You guys
10 want to know what? She did care about money. She
11 was never late to task for more money, threatening
12 to evict us if we didn't give her 100 extra. We
13 didn't deserve that and I know no one here deserved
14 the treatment they got from their landlords.

15 Let me be clear. The working
16 class raised these buildings, scrubbed these
17 floors, and kept these streets alive.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. SOSA: We're the reason
20 New York shines, not luxury developers, not
21 corporate landlords, but now they want to kick us
22 out to replace our families with strangers who will
23 never know the blood, sweat, and tears we poured
24 into these neighborhoods, no.

25 I've seen what happens when we

1

2 fight with Neighbors Helping Neighbors. We dragged
3 our neglectful landlord to court and wanted city
4 ownership of our building.

5

With Assembly Member Marcela
6 Mitaynes, our fight held passed the Good Cause
7 Eviction bill because no one should be homeless for
8 profit, but this is just the beginning. This fall
9 I'm taking -- I'm taking our struggle to the
10 University of Albany, then to law school because
11 tenants deserve lawyers who live this fight, who
12 know that housing is a human right and not a
13 commodity.

14

So I stand before you asking
15 for a no-rent increase. We're not leaving, we're
16 not begging, we're demanding. Thank you.

17

(Applause.)

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

19

Eliarsar Cano, Alondra
20 Tolentino, Ariadne Alcantara.

21

Please.

22

MS. CANO: Good afternoon. My
23 name is Eliasar Cano, and I live in Sunset Park,
24 Brooklyn, New York. I'm a member of Brooklyn
25 Tenants United Group and Neighbors Helping

1

2 Neighbors. The rent increase has several effects
3 on my finances and the well-being of my family, and
4 that is why I'm here today to ask that the rent not
5 be increased. The rent hike reduces the portion of
6 my budget available for other essential expenses
7 such as food, transportation, and healthcare.

8

It also makes it more
9 difficult to save money. With a larger portion of
10 my income going towards rent, it becomes harder to
11 save for my long-term goals, such as my children's
12 education. Greater vulnerability for my family,
13 the rent increase puts me in a more vulnerable
14 position, especially if my income is low or if I
15 face difficulties in finding alternative housing
16 options.

17

Relocation challenges: I could
18 consider moving to a more affordable place. That's
19 true, but doing so would impact the quality and
20 stability of life from my family.

21

Additionally, rent increase
22 can negatively affect a tenant's financial
23 standing, making it harder to access services such
24 as credit and other basic resources. We are asking
25 you to freeze the rent.

1

2

I hope we are being listened

3

to as the good tenants that we are. Thank you.

4

(Applause.)

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

6

Alondra Tolentino. Oh,

7

please.

8

MS. TOLENTINO: Good

9

afternoon. My name is Alondra Tolentino, and apart

10

from Neighbors Helping Neighbors, I am here to talk

11

about why do we not want the rent to increase.

12

Because every single year the

13

rent increases even more. But even though they --

14

we pay on time, the people who -- the owners, they

15

just keep the money and never fix nothing.

16

(Applause.)

17

MS. TOLENTINO: And also my

18

mom has -- and my mom and my dad have to work

19

harder every day because the rent keeps getting

20

each time higher. They do not really have a time

21

to be with me and sometimes that can affect my

22

education because my teacher told me I needed to

23

practice with reading, but I can't because I don't

24

have no one to read with.

25

MALE VOICE: Shame.

1

2

MS. TOLENTINO: And also it

3

affects them because everybody here has been paying

4

their rent on time, but they never fixed nothing.

5

So it's not fair for us to like give all the money

6

to them, most of the money and our parents

7

practically do not really have money to even afford

8

food.

9

(Audience participation.)

10

And that's not fair because

11

when the people are like getting rich and our

12

families needing the money that they have. Thank

13

you.

14

(Applause.)

15

MS. TOLENTINO: What do we

16

want?

17

AUDIENCE: To freeze the rent.

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

19

Ariadne Alcantara?

20

MS. ALCANTARA: Yes.

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Maria Uraga

22

(phonetic), you can come up. Isabel Munoz and

23

Samantha Bravo. Please, Ms. Alcantara?

24

MS. ALCANTARA: Good

25

afternoon. My name is Ariadne Alcantara. I'm a

1

2 mother, I'm Hispanic and I live in Sunset Park,
3 Brooklyn. And I, too, am also an active member of
4 Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Brooklyn Tenants
5 United.

6

(Applause.)

7

MS. ALCANTARA: I'm here to
8 speak about my basic needs. I work, but my income
9 is not enough to cover the gas and electricity
10 bills. Every year, our rent goes up, and the
11 landlord always makes excuses to avoid making
12 repairs in the apartment.

13

A rent increase affects me
14 deeply because everything is already so expensive,
15 and I have to look for a second job just to feed my
16 family. I do not want the rent to increase;
17 everything is already too expensive as it is. We
18 want the rent to freeze. Thank you for your
19 attention.

20

(Applause.)

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

22

Isabel Munoz. Isabel? And
23 then followed by Samantha Bravo and Chella Mayorga
24 (phonetic). I'm sorry.

25

Isabel.

1

2

MS. MUNOZ: Good afternoon.

3

My name is Isabel Munoz. I'm a mother, and I have lived in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, for many years.

4

5

I'm an active member of Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Brooklyn Tenants United.

6

7

I'm here to explain why the

8

proposed rent increase should not move forward. I

9

live with my family and we have gone through very

10

difficult situations. During the cold winter, we

11

had no heat and no hot water. On top of that, the

12

landlord takes too long to make repairs, yet he

13

still wants the rent paid. Neither the landlord

14

nor the super answers our calls. We tenants had to

15

take the landlord to housing court to put pressure

16

on him for him to meet his responsibilities.

17

A rent increase would affect

18

me financially because I already have to work more

19

hours. I worry about my children because I cannot

20

spend time with them due to having to work more to

21

afford the rent increases from recent years.

22

I am here to ask you not to

23

raise the rent percentage. Please, be mindful of

24

how serious the situation is. I respectfully ask

25

that you freeze the rent. Thank you for listening.

1
2 (Applause.)
3 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.
4 Thank you.
5 Samantha Bravo, Chella
6 Mayorga, and Victorina Castillo. You can all come
7 up, we'll go one at a time.
8 So, Samantha?
9 THE INTERPRETER: Oh, she was
10 -- she said she was called.
11 MS. URAGA: Maria.
12 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh, I'm
13 sorry.
14 THE INTERPRETER: Maria Uraga
15 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh, okay.
16 I'm sorry. Yes, I'm sorry. Yes, I
17 apologize. Yes.
18 MS. URAGA: Good afternoon to
19 everyone present. Thank you so much to the members
20 of the RGB for being here and listening to our
21 testimonies. My name is Maria Uraga, I'm a member
22 of Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and I live in
23 Sunset Park, Brooklyn.
24 I'm here to talk about how a
25 rent increase would affect my community. My

1

2 community is mostly made up of undocumented people,
3 working people, fathers, and mothers who today live
4 in fear. Fear of ICE raids, fear of being
5 separated from their loved ones. But despite
6 everything, they go out to work every day to
7 provide for their homes.

8

(Applause.)

9

MS. URAGA: Many people are
10 losing their jobs, and a rent increase would
11 destroy the physical and emotional stability of
12 their families. Some landlords take advantage of
13 this situation, threatening to call ICE when they
14 want to impose illegal increases or evict tenants
15 from their homes.

16

AUDIENCE: Shame.

17

MS. URAGA: I believe that the
18 only crime of undocumented people is dreaming of a
19 better future for their children, a future that was
20 denied to them in their countries of origin.
21 Therefore, I ask you, when you vote, to think of
22 all these hardworking people who cannot afford
23 another rent increase, may God give you wisdom to
24 make a difference. Thank you.

25

What do we all want everyone

1

2 that's here?

3

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

4

MS. URAGA: Thank you very

5

much.

6

(Applause.)

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

8

Isabel Munoz, Samantha Bravo, Chella Mayorga.

9

THE INTERPRETER: Isabel Munoz

10

--

11

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh, she

12

spoke?

13

THE INTERPRETER: -- spoke

14

already.

15

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Samantha? Thank

16

you.

17

MS. BRAVO: Good evening. My

18

name is Samantha Bravo. I'm from Sunset Park,

19

Brooklyn, and I'm with Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

20

(Applause.)

21

MS. BRAVO: Like mostly

22

everyone here tonight, I'm coming from work to tell

23

you just one thing; we cannot afford another rent

24

increase.

25

(Applause.)

1

2

MS. BRAVO: Each of you holds

3

a privilege that we don't. You sit on the other

4

side of these hearings and you hear people pour

5

their hearts out. You see people cry. You've

6

witnessed the fear in people's voices as they

7

describe their struggle to survive in this city.

8

You've even watched children speak on issues they

9

shouldn't even worry about. True so far.

10

(Applause.)

11

MS. BRAVO: We even had a

12

veteran come and tell their struggles. Come on.

13

If I were in your shoes, I would vote for a rent

14

freeze. And you know why? Because no one living

15

with the roaches and mice crawling through their

16

home, no one waiting months for basic repairs, no

17

one dealing with harassment from their landlord.

18

Should be expected to pay more to live in such

19

degrading conditions?

20

(Applause.)

21

MS. BRAVO: With privilege

22

comes responsibility and tonight, the

23

responsibility is yours. You have the power to

24

decide whether the quality of life from millions of

25

tenants across New York City improves or

1

2 deteriorates even further.

3

4 So I ask you, check the
5 privilege that you carry and use it to serve the
6 people of New York City. Because when the people
7 of the city are not just -- the people of New York
8 City aren't just asking, they're begging you to
9 freeze the rent. So it's time to listen. Thank
10 you.

10

(Applause.)

11

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Chella

12

Mayorga, Victorina Castillo, and Mia Tee (phonetic)

13

MS. CASTILLO: My name is

14

Victorina Castillo. I live in Dyker Heights and --

15

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Come a little

16

closer to the microphone, ma'am.

17

MS. CASTILLO: -- I came here

18

just to witness what's happening.

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Come a little

20

closer so that we can hear you.

21

MS. CASTILLO: I just want to

22

witness what's happening here. I always -- am a

23

dutiful citizen because I see the garbage trash,

24

this -- failure of this scraps that you gave

25

people, this big bins. But it's used to mix

1

2 everything in my apartment. And therefore, I
3 cannot say much because I was almost evicted in
4 this apartment.

5

But then I have to say
6 something. Tonight, I want to highlight an
7 overlooked truth. Not all landlords and not all
8 tenants face the same financial reality. Landlords
9 fall into two categories. This is my thinking.

10

The small landlords managing
11 six-unit buildings is struggling with rising taxes,
12 yeah, and maintenance costs. That's politics.

13

The large landlords
14 controlling thousands of units with corporate
15 resources to absorb financial shifts.

16

Meanwhile, tenants also have
17 stark differences. There are low-income tenants
18 barely making ends meet, forced to cut essentials
19 when rent prices. Higher earning tenants earning
20 over 100K with savings that cushion financial
21 changes.

22

And beyond income levels,
23 housing history matters. Many tenants live in
24 grandfathered rent-stabilized apartments passed
25 down through generations at lower cost. While

1

2 newcomers struggle with steep market rates.

3

4 We cannot continue using
5 one-size-fits-all rent policies and ignore these
6 differences. The small landlords maybe should have
7 alternatives like offering equity to the tenants in
8 exchange for higher rent. So there's a stake of
9 ownership that people like us should be given.

10

11 Rent stabilization should be
12 targeted, considering tenant income and financial
13 hardship, not blanket rent hikes that affect
14 everyone the same way.

15

16 Fair housing isn't just about
17 numbers. It's about understanding financial
18 realities and crafting policies that balance
19 affordability for tenants and viability for
20 landlords.

21

22 We can get so emotional, but
23 emotions do not work in this place. That's all.
24 You can shout everything. You know, crying about
25 cockroaches that live in my apartment, too. I was
almost evicted, so I cannot even voice to that
person. Excuse me, your garbage trash is just a
sin, it's just horrible. And I even sweep the
front because I cannot say the racial, I'm not a

1

2 racial person.

3

4 But different cultures living
5 in this city have their own culture. Of course,
6 you cannot live with a Japanese on top, a
7 Singaporean on the second and a Philippine on the
8 third, and an Italian on the fourth floor.

9

10 That's all. And I ask you to
11 please consider what these people are talking
12 about. In your hearts -- I don't know if you've
13 rented an apartment before. Thank you.

14

(Applause.)

15

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

16

Victorina Castillo, Mia Tee, and Sam Chira.

17

Victorina?

18

MS. CASTILLO: I just spoke.

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Mia.

20

MS. TEE: Hello. My name is

21

Mia. I am a rent-stabilized tenant in New York
22 City, and I'm with the Party for Socialism and
23 Liberation.

24

And I would like to ask the

25

Rent Guidelines Board to raise your hand if you
26 live in a rent-stabilized unit. That's

27

interesting. I would like you to raise your hand

1

2 if you're rent-burdened. Do you pay more than 50
3 percent of your income on rent?

4

(No response.)

5

MS. TEE: Have you ever had to
6 choose between rent and groceries ever? So why do
7 these nine individuals get to choose what our rent
8 is for 2 million New Yorkers?

9

(Applause.)

10

MS. TEE: Who put you on this
11 panel? And that's a rhetorical question because we
12 know who put you on this panel. It was Eric Adams
13 who has given the most funding from landlord
14 lobbies in his mayoral election.

15

(Applause.)

16

MS. TEE: So what kind of
17 democracy is this? We have a mayor who is funded
18 by landlords when most of the city is renters. And
19 we have an unelected part of individuals who say,
20 "Forget that we're losing SNAP, forget that we're
21 losing Medicare, forget that we're losing all
22 government benefits. We're going to increase the
23 on New Yorkers."

24

(Applause.)

25

MS. TEE: And I don't know

1

2 about you, maybe, Christina Smith, maybe your wages
3 went up. But my wages have not gone up in years,
4 but you know, it has gone up in years. But you
5 know what has gone up? Medical bills, groceries,
6 my rent.

7 And without people who rent in
8 New York, landlords have no jobs. It's actually a
9 fake job. And I know it's a fake job because my
10 landlord doesn't do his job.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. TEE: And so we're tired
13 of asking for a rent freeze. A rent freeze is the
14 lowest bar. It's the right to live in your home
15 for another year. That's what a rent freeze is.

16 What we're asking is total
17 public control of the Rent Guidelines Board and a
18 system that guarantees free and safe housing for
19 all New Yorkers. Fight, fight, fight. Housing is
20 a human right.

21 (Audience participation.)

22 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

23 Sam Chiera?

24 MR. CHIERA: Chiera, I mean,
25 yeah --

1
2 Hi, my name is --
3 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Adella -- oh,
4 I'm sorry.
5 MR. CHIERA: So --
6 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Stephanie
7 Bravo next.
8 MR. CHIRA: Oh, okay.
9 CHAIRMAN APPLE: One second, sir.
10 MR. CHIERA: Sure.
11 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Adella Campbell.
12 FEMALE VOICE: Bring the mic up
13 there. Bring the mic.
14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Adella
15 Campbell?
16 FEMALE VOICE: Raise the mic,
17 sir.
18 CHAIRMAN APPLE: All right.
19 FEMALE VOICE: Raise your mic.
20 Close to your mic.
21 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Sir?
22 MR. CHIERA: Yeah. Oh, hi, my
23 name is Sam Chiera. I'm the Director of Litigation
24 for Communities Resist. We're a nonprofit legal
25 services organization. Mostly what we do is we

1

2 help tenants, groups of tenants bring lawsuits
3 against their landlords for repairs and against
4 harassment and discrimination in Brooklyn and
5 Queens.

6

(Applause,)

7

MR. CHIERA: So, you know, I'm
8 a rent-stabilized tenant. Before I go there, I'd
9 just like to thank everybody for coming out and
10 testifying. Thanks to the tenants. Thanks to all
11 the community-based organizations who have come out
12 and who have organized a lot of the testimony here.
13 I really appreciate it. New York really appreciate
14 it. It really appreciate it. The tenants of New
15 York really appreciate it. And thank you to the
16 Rent Guidelines Board for hearing our testimony
17 today.

18

So what I'm here to talk to
19 you guys about are the groups of tenants that we
20 represent, which are primarily low-income,
21 struggling working families, right? Who are --
22 enjoy the protections of rent-stabilized rent
23 stabilization without which they would not be in
24 their homes. I know this because their landlords
25 often try to deprive them of their rights to rent

1

2 stabilization by hook or by crook, right?

3

4 I'd like to say that -- look,
5 this is -- this is a time of deep crisis, a deep
6 housing crisis. And while landlord profits are
7 going up, the wages of the working-class poor are
8 not, and they struggle. And I see their struggle
9 every day --

9

(Applause.)

10

MR. CHIERA: -- to put food on
11 their tables -- to put food on their tables, to
12 send their families -- to make sure their families
13 can get to school, to pay for basic necessities,
14 right? They cannot afford another rent increase.

15

 The -- over the last four
16 years during this administration, the rent has gone
17 up on yearly leases almost at what? 9 percent?
18 It's a ridiculous amount, right?

19

 Again, there's an economic
20 crisis for the poor, right? There's not an
21 economic crisis for everyone, but definitely for
22 the poor. And they're the ones who need
23 protections. That they need the protections of
24 rent stabilization. And they -- we cannot afford
25 an increase 0.00. 0.00. Thank you all.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,

4

sir.

5

Stephanie Bravo.

6

(Audience participation.)

7

MS. BRAVO: Hi. My name is

8

Stephanie and I live in Brooklyn, Sunset Park, with

9

my two baby boys. I'm a full-time college student,

10

a part-time worker, and a single mom who left an

11

abusive relationship to create a safer future for

12

my children.

13

Rent in NYC is already

14

unaffordable and only -- and an increase would be

15

devastating for families like mine. I live with my

16

parents because I can't afford a place of our own.

17

Even with food stamps and a childcare voucher. I

18

struggle to keep up balancing night classes, work,

19

and motherhood is already overwhelming.

20

Every dollar matters, but it's

21

not just the cost, it's the conditions. In the

22

winter, we don't get heat or hot water. Our

23

ceiling is falling apart and instead of fixing it,

24

our landlord just slides cement over it. Our

25

windows need to be replaced, and it was easier for

1

2 our landlord to nail them shut.

3

4 Now we -- now we, along with
5 one- and a 2-year-old, live in an unsafe, unhealthy
6 condition because you give us no other choice. We
7 spoke up about this, and now we have to go to court
8 and fight eviction.

8

9 I'm sharing my story because
10 behind every statistic is a real person, a family
11 trying to survive. I urge you to think about
12 families like mine when considering rent increases.

12

13 We are not asking for favors.
14 We are asking for fairness. For a chance to live
15 with dignity in the city we call home. We need
16 support, not more hardship. Thank you.

16

(Applause.)

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

18

Adella Campbell, Eltana Wey
19 (phonetic) Barbara Lopez, Fabian Bravo.

20

(Applause.)

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I'm sorry.
22 Please, I'm sorry.

23

MS. LOPEZ: Good afternoon.
24 Thank you for your attention. My name is Barbara
25 Lopez. I live in Sunset Park, and I have lived in

1

2 the same building more -- about 42 years.

3

4 I'm here to talk to you about
5 the situation that I'm living in my building. It's
6 been very difficult living under horrible
7 conditions. I had to fix my bathroom, the flooring
8 for the entire apartment. I also had to replace
9 the refrigerator last year. And now I have to fix
10 the stove and the landlord never takes my calls.

11

12 I live above the subway. The
13 doors and the windows are broken all over the place
14 and -- are broken and there are holes all over the
15 place.

16

MALE VOICE: Shame.

17

18 MS. LOPEZ: I also had to get
19 a cat because of the mice. And all of these costs
20 have come out of my pocket.

21

AUDIENCE: Shame.

22

23 MS. LOPEZ: My neighbors are
24 scared to say anything due to their immigration
25 status. And this has affected myself and my family
very much. My children have left, they do not
want to live like this. They grew up in Sunset
Park and we love Sunset Park. And at some point,
just with the movement of the train, the building

1

2 is going to just crumble. I have to renew my lease
3 in August, and they're going to increase it again.

4

I am 75 years old, and since
5 the pandemic, I have not been able to find a steady
6 job. I work two or three days, and that's
7 basically for me to be able to pay rent. That's
8 all I can afford, with that is just to pay my rent.

9

I have to continue working,
10 and I want to stay in Sunset Park. Please remember
11 that we are human beings and we have to work.

12 Thank you so much for your attention.

13

(Applause.)

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

15

Blanca Perez. I'm sorry. Your name, sir?

16

MR. BRAVO: Fabian.

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh, Fabian.

18

MR. BRAVO: Yeah.

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Yeah, that's

20 Fabian. Please, sir?

21

MR. BRAVO: What do we want?

22

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

23

MR. BRAVO: What do we want?

24

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

25

MR. BRAVO: What do we want?

1

2

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

3

(Audience participation in

4

Spanish.)

5

MR. BRAVO: My name is Fabian

6

Bravo, and I live in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. I'm a

7

tenant organizer with Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

8

Basic living expenses keep rising, and the rent

9

increase you are proposing is basically unfair.

10

It's not right to prioritize landlords' interests

11

over those of tenants. It's not fair.

12

In the recent years, the

13

increases have overwhelmingly favored landlords.

14

Housing courts are full of eviction cases, many of

15

them without just cause. All of this is deeply

16

concerning, and these rent increases are tightening

17

the noose around our necks. For our children and

18

our community, we are asking you to freeze the

19

rent. Thank you.

20

(Applause.)

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Adella.

22

MS. PEREZ: Blanca.

23

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Blanca Perez.

24

Do we have Blanca?

25

Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, we do.

1

2 Please, Blanca.

3

MS. PEREZ: Hello. My name is
4 Blanca Perez, and I live in Park Slope, Brooklyn,
5 New York. I'm an active member of Neighbors
6 Helping Neighbors and Brooklyn Tenants United.

7

(Applause.)

8

MS. PEREZ: I've been living
9 in my building since 1990, and for many years, the
10 landlord didn't make any repairs to the apartment
11 or the building. Five years ago, someone bought
12 the building and offered us money to move out. He
13 told us he had purchased the building to renovate
14 it and sell it at a higher price.

15

I remember when I first moved
16 into this building, the Hispanic and African
17 American community was the majority. Now, we are
18 only 1 percent. Gentrification has led to higher
19 rents and has slowly displaced our community.

20

MALE VOICE: Shame. Done with
21 the poor.

22

MS. PEREZ: I have to be
23 honest with you, I'm living in a very precarious
24 situation at the moment. With my current income, I
25 can't afford to pay the rent and also cover basic

1

2 needs like food, electricity, gas, and my insulin.

3

It is sad to say, but someone

4 of my age has to now make the decision of paying

5 the rent or covering personal needs. Of course, my

6 children cannot help me because they have their own

7 responsibilities, and my fear is that I would

8 become destitute.

9

AUDIENCE: Shame.

10

MR. PEREZ: I please ask you

11 to place your hand on your heart and to think of

12 all New Yorkers. Thank you so much.

13

(Applause.)

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

15

Charlene Davis. Is Charlene

16 Davis here?

17

MS. DAVIS: I'm here

18

(unintelligible.)

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Can we bring

20 a microphone up to her, I know -- I think she needs

21 -- yeah assistance, if you could.

22

I'll also ask Roberto

23

Rodriguez and Alma Moran to be ready to speak next.

24

Ms. Davis?

25

MS. DAVIS: Yes. Thank you

1

2 folks so much for allowing me to speak. My name is
3 Charlene Davis, and I'm with Met Council.

4

My reasoning for coming out
5 today is to represent those who don't have a voice.
6 I am disabled, I use a wheelchair. I think it's
7 unfair for the Board not to have someone on the
8 board that represents someone who looks like me.

9

(Applause.)

10

MS. DAVIS: In order -- in
11 order to understand someone like me, you have to be
12 like me. It's not easy living your life from a
13 wheelchair. It's not easy having to determine
14 whether or not you can pay your rent or you can buy
15 your medicine or you can get your cancer medicine.

16

Medicine is very expensive,
17 and these landlords need to realize that one day
18 you're going to be old, too, and you never know
19 what's going to happen to you. And you may need
20 someone's help.

21

(Applause.)

22

MS. DAVIS: It's time to stop
23 and freeze these rents. It's time for the
24 government to realize that people can't afford
25 this. We are having more and more homeless people.

1

2 And with making this rent go up, the only thing
3 you're doing is making it worse and making it be
4 more homeless people. It's a shame that the
5 government will pay for someone to stay in a
6 shelter, billions of dollars, but will not give you
7 that kind of money to pay for your rent.

8

(Applause.)

9

MS. DAVIS: It's ridiculous.

10 It needs to stop. I would like to see a Board that
11 represents everybody in this place. People who
12 come from other countries, people who don't speak
13 English, Russian people, people in wheelchairs.
14 Every time I go to a meeting, people are looking at
15 me like I'm crazy. "What are you doing here?" I'm
16 here to represent those who cannot represent
17 themselves and who cannot speak up.

18

(Applause.)

19

MS. DAVIS: Sometimes going

20 into these buildings is very difficult because your
21 Board don't think about the handicapped people.
22 How are they going to be able to get in here to
23 speak or to be able to be in front to speak? I
24 have to sit way back here, why?

25

There are laws that are

1

2 against not having access and having access to
3 bathrooms for people to use like myself.

4

5 Please, think about what
6 you're doing because one day this could be you.
7 Thank you.

7

(Applause.)

8

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,
9 ma'am. Roberto Rodriguez and Alma
10 Moran.

11

Roberto, please.

12

MS. RODRIGUEZ: My name is
13 Roberto Rodriguez. I live between North and South
14 Williamsburg. I am here today because since I've
15 been living in this neighborhood for 60 years, I
16 want to be able to continue to live in this
17 neighborhood where all my friends and my children
18 have grown up.

19

(Applause.)

20

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I can't
21 understand how these increases have been occurring
22 since January the 1st of 2022. 9 percent since
23 then, my recent new lease renewal is \$40, and I
24 expect that there's going to be another \$40 by the
25 end of the day.

1

2

3

4

5

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21

22

23

24

25

This is not right. When you live in a neighborhood, when you live in a building that you -- a pre-war building that has six empty apartments for 20 years --

(Applause.)

MR. RODRIGUEZ: -- you have to run and drop or throw the garbage from the landing into the courtyard because it's rat-infested, okay?

AUDIENCE: Shame.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: When you walk up the stairs, there are roaches that have learned to fly up, okay? I live on the fifth floor and they fly up. And these are bed bugs as well, okay?

How can you tell me you want to give the real estate industry an increase when they claim that they have made a profit of 12 percent? That's not right.

I am a retired New York City employee, and I can't afford to pay my rent. I have to be hopping on my neighborhood pantries in order to make the days end and feed my family. And you want to increase these people's income. That's a shame. That's a shame.

AUDIENCE: Shame on you.

1

2

MR. RODRIGUEZ: How can you

3

live? How can you sleep knowing this? Okay? The

4

trend is that the average medium income is not

5

going up. Rents are going up, they're going to

6

continue to go up. This is why I tell everybody in

7

here, when you walk out, make sure you get a paper

8

like this and wrote for this man. You know why?

9

Because he's listening to what I am saying.

10

(Applause.)

11

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He is

12

listening to the communities who are rent burdens,

13

and this is what we need.

14

I hope that next year, when I

15

come back to a hearing like this, I only see two

16

people up there and they know who they are. The

17

rest, I wish you good luck. Thank you.

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

19

Alma Moran. If I could, next, Nicole Cohen and

20

Brianna Selene.

21

MS. MORAN: Good evening,

22

everyone. My name is Salma Moran, and I live at

23

293 Cooper Street. I represent the group in

24

Losurez (phonetic) and we're an organization that

25

is asking for help and for support with the person

1

2 that we rent from.

3

4 Three weeks ago, I had a
5 problem. I have a 2-year-old son and an 8-year-old
6 daughter. I could not cook for my children in the
7 morning, in the afternoon, in the nighttime, I was
8 like that for three weeks.

8

MALE VOICE: Shame.

9

10 MS. MORAN: And I had to buy
11 food and buy food and buy food when food is so
12 expensive.

12

13 The landlord does not want to
14 reimburse me for the money that I spent on that but
15 he does want his entire rent.

15

AUDIENCE: Shame.

16

17 MS. MORANO: So the apartment
18 is slowly self-destructing. I live on the fifth
19 floor, and there are people that live on the floors
20 above me. When they shower, the water just comes
21 leaking all the way down to my apartment. The
22 cabinets, they squeak; the doors don't always close
23 for the cabinets. And underneath the kitchen sink,
24 there's like a hole, and it smells like just stank
25 water.

25

Things in the apartment that

1

2 are not fixed. And how do they think that it's
3 fair to raise rent? It's not. They don't care if
4 you're living well, if you're living horribly, they
5 don't care. They just want to increase and
6 increase and increase the rent, but what's not
7 increasing is the income.

8

(Applause.)

9

MS. MORAN: It's unfair that I
10 had to spend three weeks not being able to cook for
11 my children. I couldn't boil them eggs. I
12 couldn't make a pancake. It's not fair. And I
13 spent three weeks like that.

14

AUDIENCE: Shame.

15

MS. MORAN: So that is the
16 reason why I am here, and I'm protesting because
17 this is unfair. There are many elderly people who
18 cannot pay something like this because they no
19 longer work, and it's just not right.

20

I live on the fifth floor, and
21 it's getting harder and harder to go up the stairs
22 with my, you know, bags if I buy food or things
23 that I have to buy with my baby, with my 8-year-old
24 daughter. It's not fair. We have asked for
25 elevators; they refuse to pay -- to put in an

1

2 elevator, but they're always wanting their rent.

3 And not only that they want their rent on time, but

4 it's not fair. It's for them. It's like rent,

5 rent, rent. And we ask, can we have some repairs?

6 Can we have some repairs? A month goes by, another

7 month goes by a month -- another month goes by, and

8 nothing gets done. But the rent they wanted on

9 time.

10 AUDIENCE: Shame.

11 MS. MORAN: That's all I

12 wanted to say. I feel like someone should put

13 themselves in my shoes and try to understand what I

14 went through and what I lived. Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

17 Nicole Cohen, Brianna Selene, and Catherine Solerno

18 (phonetic).

19 Nicole.

20 MS. COHEN: My name is Nicole

21 Cohen. I'm a proud PSCQE member and Brooklyn

22 College employee, and I'm here to demand a rent

23 freeze from the Board this year.

24 I'm a social worker living in

25 a rent-stabilized apartment in the beautiful

1

2 community of Ditmas Park. I serve thousands of
3 students and their family members a year running
4 the food pantry on campus and assisting students
5 with urgent housing needs. And my own rent
6 stabilization makes my continued work possible.

7 40,000 CUNY employees support
8 275,000 students per year. 45 percent of them are
9 first-generation college students, a testament to
10 the city's commitment to education and upward
11 mobility. 52 percent of undergraduate CUNY
12 students are low-income compared to 32 percent
13 nationwide.

14 Students fight hard to achieve
15 the best possible life for themselves and their
16 families. I work with hundreds of struggling
17 students to afford a living in this city --
18 hundreds of students struggling to afford a living
19 in the city as this Adam's appointed Rent
20 Guidelines Board has raised our rents year after
21 year.

22 Landlord profits are up, but
23 my students cannot afford rent as is, let alone
24 increases. Their families are lifelong New
25 Yorkers. They're city workers, nurses, non-profit

1

2 workers, childcare providers. These are essential
3 jobs performed by cherished residents who make our
4 city run. We can't let the backbone of our city
5 get priced out.

6 Raising the rent would be a
7 failure for the 50,000 CUNY students who graduate
8 annually into roles that keep our city vibrant,
9 educated, and pioneering. Our community is strong,
10 our popular is diverse, and our communities are
11 safe.

I want to remind you the
12 preliminary ranges are not legally binding. I
13 implore you to do the right thing and freeze the
14 rent for 2.4 million rent-stabilized tenants on
15 June 27th. Thank you so much for your time.

16 (Applause.)

17 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.
18 Brianna Selene and then followed by Catherine
19 Solerno.

20 MS. SELENE: Hello, my --
21 fellow Brooklynites. My name's Brianna Selene, I'm
22 a born and raised New York resident, and a resident
23 of 1834 Caton Avenue. Our tenant union has been in
24 an ongoing struggle for the last year, demanding
25 basic maintenance and humanity from our slumlords,

1

2 Jonathan Samet and Leon Goldenberg.

3 (Audience participation.)

4 MS. SELENE: Despite winning
5 our group HP action last year, despite our
6 landlords being mandated to make repairs in the
7 building, despite being placed and taken off of the
8 AEP program, the city -- the city has for slumlords
9 -- our neighbors are still living in hazardous and
10 life-threatening conditions.

11 AUDIENCE: Shame.

12 MS. SELENE: Just last week, I
13 spoke to my neighbors. One woman was a young
14 mother with young children, dealing with lead paint
15 on her walls. A disabled senior woman who was
16 injured when a cabinet fell on her after
17 complaining about it many times to the landlord.
18 Tenants with mold, roaches, leaks horrible issues
19 that are keeping them up at night. Where is the
20 money going?

21 My landlord got an increase
22 last year. Landlords got a historic rent increase
23 last year, in fact. Their income has increased 12
24 percent. Do you think my neighbors have had an
25 increase?

1

2

AUDIENCE: No.

3

4

MS. SELENE: Any system that
would result in this is a broken system.

5

6

7

8

9

And to my fellow tenants, we
can yell and scream at these people all night. We
can beg them for change. It's not going to change.
They're going to -- the only way it's going to
change is if we organize.

10

(Applause.)

11

12

13

MS. SELENE: If we mobilize.
We have to exercise our power. We have to make
them afraid of us. Join org.

14

(Applause.)

15

16

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.
Catherine Solerno, Jasmine
Reed, followed by Isabella Greco.

18

Catherine?

19

20

MS. SOLERNO: Hi. I'm Cathy
Solerno.

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

22

23

24

25

MS. SOLERNO: I wrote
something -- I'm a rent-stabilized tenant in Park
Slope. I wrote something and I'm just going to try
to just go off my mind.

1
2 I was thinking a lot about,
3 like, I've been to these before, and I was like,
4 how can -- I know you guys are actually just
5 people. And I'm like, I don't know if these people
6 are really listening or if this is like a box to
7 check. How can I make people like, hear what I'm
8 saying? And I was like, I don't know, I think I
9 just have to say how I feel. And like everyone
10 here, I feel lucky to have a rent-stabilized unit,
11 even though it takes 50 percent of my income.
12 That's right, 50 percent of my income.

13 And now I'm in a position
14 where when student loans restart, which will be
15 another \$600 a month for me.

16 And what we are left with
17 after COVID is that everyone who was not disabled
18 is now halfway on their way to being disabled. So
19 my medical costs now, because I go to physical
20 therapy twice a week and I have mental health
21 services. So student loans and health costs with
22 insurance, I have health insurance, are \$1,600 a
23 month.

24 Here's my question to all of
25 you. Is a city that has to constantly have new

1

2 residents coming in to be able to pay -- afford the
3 increasing rent and the fees, is that like a
4 functioning city, or is it a pyramid scheme?

5

(Applause.)

6

MS. SOLERNO: And I'm not --

7

I'm not like trying to go up here and be like, I'm

8

like all edgy. Like literally, you are pricing the

9

people out who help your kids, the people who

10

bandage your -- the wounds of the members of your

11

family that come in. This can't just be a city of

12

finance bros and lawyers. It can't. I'm sorry.

13

It can't.

14

(Applause.)

15

MS. SOLERNO: And if I -- if I

16

can make one point, honestly like what is an

17

essential worker? Respectfully, landlord is not

18

essential workers. I'm sorry. They're not --

19

they're not. Not anymore, not anymore. I'm sorry.

20

They're not.

21

(Applause.)

22

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

23

Jasmine Reed. Isabella Greco.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Jasmine? Jasmine

1

2 Reed.

3

MS. REED: Hi, everyone. My
name is Jasmine. I'm an organizer with the Party
for Socialism and Liberation.

6

(Applause.)

7

MS. REED: And I am a worker
and a tenant who is sick and tired of being sick
and tired --

10

(Applause.)

11

MS. REED: -- of how
increasingly impossible it is to afford a basic,
decent life in the richest city, in the richest
country on earth.

15

(Applause.)

16

MS. REED: Because of
undemocratic bodies like the Rent Guidelines Board
--

19

AUDIENCE: No.

20

MS. REED: -- who hold
hearings like this to disguise the fact that each
and every one of them was appointed with a mandate
to raise the rent by a -- a mayor who is himself a
landlord, and who received more money from the real
estate lobby than any other candidate in the last

1

2 election. Shame.

3

AUDIENCE: Shame.

4

MS. REED: I'm sick and tired

5

of a system that prioritizes the greed of landlords

6

over the needs of tenants. Millions of New Yorkers

7

who are struggling to pay skyrocketing rents. Who

8

are struggling to pay skyrocketing rents and seeing

9

more and more of our beloved neighbors being pushed

10

out of our communities because the Rent Guidelines

11

Board has a legal mandate to keep landlords rich

12

and tenants poorer. Shame.

13

AUDIENCE: Shame.

14

MS. REED: So I'm here to not

15

only demand a rent freeze, but to demand that we as

16

working-class New Yorkers organize, mobilize, and

17

build the only democratic power that we have.

18

(Applause.)

19

MS. REED: Which is people

20

power. Enough people power to overturn this whole

21

rotten system that keeps us sick and tired for a

22

new system that guarantees housing as a human

23

right. Fight. Fight, fight.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

MS. REED: Fight. Fight.

1

2 Fight.

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,

4

ma'am. Thank you.

5

Isabella Greco, Carlos

6

Guerrero, and Chase Loudon.

7

Isabella?

8

MS. GRECO: Hello. Hi, my

9

name is Isabella. I'm also a member of the Party

10

for Socialism and Liberation.

11

(Applause.)

12

MS. GRECO: You know, they

13

want us to come up here. They basically want us on

14

our knees, you know, begging for crumbs while

15

they're trying to figure out, am I going to get a

16

second or a third plate? And it's like, we also --

17

we made the food. And then -- and then we're going

18

to have to wash the dishes. So it's like --

19

And another thing, what are

20

you guys writing up there? Are you -- are you like

21

-- are you listening to our pleas and being like,

22

mmm-hmm, okay, this person's got roaches. You

23

know, this person's got mold and leaks. You know,

24

we're asking you for one thing. Freeze the rent.

25

Freeze the rent. We deserve dignified housing.

1

2 Housing for all. Housing is a human right. We
3 deserve hygiene. We deserve a Board that
4 represents us, that has our needs in mind.

5

 You know, it's crazy to see --
6 to see the links that the state is willing to go to
7 and the money that they're willing to spend to
8 oppress us, to deport us, to brutalize us. But
9 they won't lift a finger to house us, to feed us,
10 to -- you know, give us proper education that we
11 deserve. And it is sick. It is sick that we have
12 to come up here and beg when -- like my comrade
13 Jasmine said, you know, they're here to represent
14 one interest, the interest of the wealthy, the
15 ruling class. They want to raise the rent.

16

 And it's ridiculous that we
17 have to, you know, spend -- we all just worked
18 today, we'll work tomorrow, we probably worked
19 yesterday, and we're coming here on a -- on a night
20 to, you know, demand something that should be
21 already given to us. Something that we are already
22 working for every day. And it's ridiculous.
23 Fight, fight, fight. Housing is a human right.

24

(Audience participation.)

25

(Applause.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

3

Carlos Guerrero?

4

MR. GUERRERO: I'm here.

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Chase Loudon?

6

Carlos.

7

MR. GUERRERO: Hello. Good

8

evening, everybody. My name is Carlos. I'm here

9

as a tenant in a rent-stabilized unit. I've also

10

-- I'm here as a -- I work in permanent supportive

11

housing for almost a decade. And I wanted to come

12

here to demand a rent freeze and to oppose the

13

violence that this Board is proposing for New

14

Yorkers.

15

I know a fundamental truth,

16

and I do know that housing instability is a direct

17

violence to people's physical and mental health.

18

(Applause.)

19

MR. GUERRERO: And suggesting

20

a rent increase now, while our federal government

21

is so proposing to kick people out of Medicaid,

22

kick people out of their SNAP Benefits. This is

23

violence. This is violence for our fellow New

24

Yorkers.

25

(Applause.)

1

2

MR. GUERRERO: Proposing a

3

rent hike when people are struggling financially,

4

when people are not able to get a pay increase for

5

--I've never, in my five years living in New York

6

City, I haven't had a pay increase, but my rent has

7

been increased several times.

8

I also want to highlight that

9

New York City is the place where we came to

10

understand that housing and stability is

11

fundamental to people's well-being.

12

New York City is -- sorry,

13

securing housing prevents trauma and further

14

violence. So proposing an increase in rent is

15

proposing violence to New Yorkers.

16

(Applause.)

17

MR. GUERRERO: It's a shame

18

that an unelected board is deciding which New

19

Yorkers will have to decide -- will have to face

20

the violence of an eviction.

21

Your decision that we are

22

opposing will have to make people decide whether

23

they have to buy medicine, insulin, like we've

24

heard, or buy rent -- or pay rent. People who will

25

have to make the decision to buy their medication,

1

2 to buy their food. People will have to make a
3 decision whether they need to get a second or third
4 job to pay their rent. And we also heard here that
5 children are also the victims of the violence that
6 this divorce is proposing.

7 And like it's been said here,
8 you have the responsibility, you have the power to
9 prevent this violence, to prevent this uncertainty,
10 to prevent just the emotional turmoil that comes
11 with housing instability.

12 So do the right thing for New
13 Yorkers. Do the right thing and freeze the rent.

14 (Applause.)

15 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,
16 sir.

17 Chase Loudon, Eden Clark, and
18 Lyndon Nicholls.

19 Chase?

20 MR. LOUDON: Hello, everyone.
21 My name is Chase, and I'm an organizer with the
22 Party for Socialism and Liberation.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. LOUDON: At this moment,
25 700,000 New Yorkers are sleeping in shelters across

1

2 the city, while 100,000 rent-stabilized apartments
3 sit empty. I'll say that again. Shame. 700,000
4 New Yorkers sleep in shelters while 100,000
5 rent-stabilized apartments are empty. They're
6 vacant. Why? Why is this happening and why is
7 this like this?

8 Also, one in five New Yorkers
9 at this moment cannot meet their needs. One in
10 five, that's 20 percent. And I could say from a
11 firsthand experience, I work at a food pantry.
12 Every day, we do distribution, we have lines going
13 down the block -- down the block. It goes on
14 forever and ever and we've had a huge increase in
15 the amount of people that have come to our pantry
16 for the past year.

17 And does anyone on the Rent
18 Guideline Board know what the price of eggs is
19 right now? Does anyone know? Only one of you who
20 lives in a rent-stabilized apartment, so who knows?
21 Right now the price of eggs is \$9. That's insane.
22 That's outrageous.

23 And you really expect people
24 to be paying 50 percent of their income to rent
25 while they have to go and pay exorbitant amounts of

1

2 prices for groceries, for healthcare, for hygiene,
3 for things they should expect to be -- to be
4 cheaper, really in this economy? Shame.

5

AUDIENCE: Shame.

6

MR. LOUDON: I live in
7 Bed-Stuy, and I learned recently about a month ago
8 that the NYPD is starting a new initiative that's
9 called the Quality of Life Division. Eric Adams,
10 our corrupt mayor, our landlord mayor, is creating
11 this new division and they're going to be doing
12 things that affect the suppose, you know, quality
13 of life. And you can expect, it's not things like
14 cracking down on corrupt landlords. It's going to
15 be things like, making sure people don't have their
16 feet up on the subway.

17

Last year when I moved out of
18 my old apartment, my landlord stole my security
19 deposit, \$1,800. Where were the police -- where
20 was the police done when I needed that? Where were
21 -- where was the police when the landlords
22 forcefully evicted us from our apartments? Where
23 were the landlords where when we had to deal with
24 roaches? Where were the police then? There were
25 nowhere to be seen.

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Instead of sending money for housing, for education, Eric Adams is sending money for more cops to stand around on their phones, on the subway. And it's -- it's complete nonsense.

And I'm here and I say that I want a rent freeze, but I want more than a rent freeze. As you all know, working people -- working people run this city. We clothe your children, we wash your dishes, we make your food, we take out your trash, and we should run the housing as well.

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

(Audience participation.)

MR. LOUDON: Thank you,
everyone.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

MR. LOUDON: Fight, fight,
fight.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Eden Clark,
Lyndon Nicholls, and Fransisca Guzman.

MR. CLARK: All right. How's it going, everyone? My name's Eden. Thank you all for your testimony. I left my last rent-stabilized building because the ceiling and walls of the

1

2 entire top floor were full of black mold and my
3 neighbor's ceiling collapsed. Shame.

4

I'm up here because I want to be
5 really clear about what we're dealing with today,
6 right? So we have on the one hand landlords who of
7 these rent-stabilized buildings, 88 percent of whom
8 own 100 or more units. Shame. And who by the Rent
9 Guidelines Board own reports have made record
10 profits in the last year. Shame.

11

And then we have 2.4 million
12 rent-stabilized tenants. 50 percent or more of
13 whom are pay -- are rent-burdened.

14

So I want to be really clear
15 about what this is. This is a wealth transfer.
16 This is a wealth transfer, exactly like they're
17 trying to do to us in Congress right now. They
18 want to steal our hard-earned money and give it to
19 the pocket -- line the pockets of a small number
20 of landlords. Maybe Christina and Robert's pocket
21 specifically, right?

22

(Applause.)

23

MR. CLARK: It's abuse.

24

You're right.

25

So the last thing that I want

1
2 to mention while I'm up here, a public member of --
3 a former public member of the Rent Guidelines Board
4 recently went on record and said that the Rent
5 Guidelines Board chair, Doug, apparently makes a
6 call before the vote to all the public members and
7 tells them where they think that the rate should
8 land. That doesn't sound like a very democratic
9 process to me. Does that sound like a democratic
10 process to you?

11 AUDIENCE: No.

12 MR. CLARK: No, it's not.

13 So we want not just a rent
14 freeze so that we can live in our homes with
15 dignity and not have to suffer and make horrible
16 choices every day but we want a democratic process
17 where we are in charge because we are the millions
18 of New Yorkers and there are a very small number of
19 landlords in this city.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. CLARK: Freeze the rent.
22 Freeze the rent.

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MR. CLARK: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

1

2

Lyndon Nicholls, followed by

3

Fransisca Guzman and Angelique Cintron.

4

MR. NICHOLLS: Good evening.

5

My name is Lyndon and I'm with the Party for

6

Socialism and Liberation.

7

We've had children testify,

8

we've had elders testify, we've had veterans, we

9

have people who have taken time out of their

10

evening, their Monday evening who have worked long,

11

long hours come here today. And honestly, I want

12

to thank you guys for being here, not them.

13

(Applause.)

14

MR. NICHOLLS: I'm not here to

15

appeal to the people at that table. I'm here to

16

appeal to the people who have shown up at this

17

room, right? These people are not more dignified

18

than us. These people are not more intelligent.

19

These people are not representative of the

20

working-class people of New York City.

21

(Applause.)

22

MR. NICHOLLS: These are just

23

people who have been chosen by a landlord to put on

24

a show of democracy. And I feel bad for them.

25

It's pitiful because at the end of the day, their

1

2 names will forever be remembered as standing on the
3 wrong side of history.

4

(Applause.)

5

6 MR. NICHOLLS: None of them
7 have seriously had to worry about living paycheck
8 to paycheck. We just saw that only one of them
9 lives in rent-stabilized housing, and yet we have
10 people out here begging tonight for adequate
11 housing.

11

12 45 percent of single adults
13 experiencing homelessness and 38 percent of
14 homeless individuals are earning wages while
15 homeless. This is one of the
16 wealthiest cities in the country -- no, in the
17 world and we have families doubling, tripling up in
18 tiny apartments with roofs that cave in, with
19 roaches, with black mold. This is violence.

19

(Applause.)

20

21 MR. NICHOLLS: There is no
22 dignity in upholding a system where this can be
23 true. And this is not just an issue of the Rent
24 Guidelines Board. This is a problem with a system
25 that is not broken but is doing exactly what it was
designed to do. And that is to extract money from

1

2 the working-class people.

3

(Applause.)

4

MR. NICHOLLS: We want a

5

system that guarantees housing for all people. And

6

we want it run by the people. Not those people,

7

but working-class people.

8

A rent freeze is just the

9

beginning; we need to reject a corrupt RGB. We

10

need a system that guarantees dignity for people in

11

here -- people here in New York City.

12

(Applause.)

13

MR. NICHOLLS: You may have

14

the power to call a rent freeze or rent increase

15

show. But the people in this room know that that

16

power pairs in comparison to the power of the

17

people --

18

(Applause.)

19

MR. NICHOLLS: -- and when the

20

people come to power, we will remember the names of

21

the people sitting at that table that denied us

22

dignity. And so what we are going to do is fight,

23

we will fight, we will fight, we will fight. We

24

will channel our numbers. We will organize, we

25

will come to this hearing, we will come to the next

1

2 one and we will come to every damn hearing until
3 working-class people in this country have power not
4 over just this Board, but the whole damn city the
5 whole damn country, and the whole damn world.

6 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

7 MR. NICHOLLS: So I want to
8 remind us who's got the power?

9 AUDIENCE: We got the power.

10 MR. NICHOLLS: What kind of
11 power?

12 AUDIENCE: People's power.

13 MR. NICHOLLS: Who's got the
14 power?

15 AUDIENCE: We got the power.

16 MR. NICHOLLS: What kind of power?

17 AUDIENCE: People's power.

18 MR. NICHOLLS: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you,
20 sir. Francisco Guzman, Angelique

21 Cintron, and Lauren -- let me try this one. I'm
22 sorry. Gniazdowski (phonetic)

23 THE INTERPRETER: No,
24 Francisca?

25 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Fransisca.

1

2

THE INTERPRETER: This is

3

Francisca Guzman, not that one.

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

5

THE INTERPRETER: This is

6

Francisco Rodriguez.

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh.

8

THE INTERPRETER: Is there a

9

Francisca Guzman?

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: It's fine.

11

Yes, she can go. It's fine -- it's fine.

12

MS. RODRIGUEZ: My name is

13

Francisca Rodriguez. Thank you very much for

14

everything. I live in -- at -- in the building at

15

1060 Ocean Avenue in Brooklyn.

16

And all the undocumented

17

people, the Hispanics that live in my building, in

18

my community are just hardworking people that go to

19

work with fear because they have to pay rent.

20

We do not want a rent

21

increase. Every year, where I live, the landlord

22

increases my rent \$100.

23

AUDIENCE: Shame.

24

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I live alone

25

with my son. I have to work and I basically am

1

2 only there to say goodnight to him. I want the
3 rent to be frozen. Thank you for everything.

4

(Applause.)

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

6

Thank you, ma'am.

7

Angelique Cintron --

8

MS. CINTRON: Hi, everybody.

9

CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- Lauren

10 Gniazdowski, and Simone Sempri.

11

MS. CINTRON: My name is

12

Angelique Cintron. I'm a community organizer, a

13

member of the 1834 Caton Tennis Unit in Flatbush.

14

I'm also a teacher, and broke my heart to see

15

children testifying today.

16

I originally thought I

17

testified by sharing a story about the conditions

18

in my own apartment, but then I did some research

19

about the RGB and realized that this is not a Board

20

of people I'm interested in making an appeal to.

21

The whole premise of these

22

hearings is absurd to me. It is absurd to me that

23

nine unelected people, some of whom are vocally

24

against rent-stabilized housing entirely - yes, I

25

looked at your Twitter accounts. You have the

1

2 power to make decisions that affect the lives of
3 the over 2 million people who live in
4 rent-stabilized apartments, including myself.

5 It is absurd to me that any
6 amount of an increase is being considered at all
7 when the landlord's profits have only risen every
8 year. Landlords like my own, who has the wealth to
9 own almost 200 units in Brooklyn, but refuses to
10 hire licensed professionals to make repairs in our
11 building. Where's our rent money going? Like so
12 many people have asked today.

13 In my building, I could say
14 for sure it's not going towards replacing our
15 messed-up boiler. It's not going towards
16 installing an ADA-compliant ramp, so our neighbors
17 who struggle with mobility can't actually leave
18 their homes. There are neighbors we talked to who
19 couldn't make it to this meeting today because they
20 can't physically leave our -- leave a building.

21 AUDIENCE: Shame.

22 MS. CINTRON: And it's not
23 going towards addressing the many pest issues we
24 face. I realized how common all the issues we face
25 in my apartment are when my roommate and I decided

1

2 to go in door-knocking last week to talk to our
3 neighbors about their housing conditions. We
4 talked at length about all the specific issues
5 they're facing, and one thing was clear across the
6 Board.

7

When our building was actively
8 putting pressure on our landlord as a collective
9 that is when repairs started getting made.

10

(Audience participation.)

11

MS. CINTRON: Not because some
12 people appointed by the mayor decided they wanted
13 to start representing tenants, but because we were
14 organized enough to take matters into our own
15 hands.

16

We're now starting to build that
17 pressure against our landlord again, and I urge
18 everyone here, if you aren't already organizing
19 your building, you got to get organized.

20

(Applause.)

21

MS. CINTRON: Like so many people have said, a
22 system where nine unelected Board members have the
23 power to increase our rents and displace working
24 New Yorkers. A system where we have landlords in
25 the first place is a rotten system. We need a city

1

2 run by workers, and we need to fight for it.

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

4 (Audience participation.)

5 MS. CINTRON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

7 Lauren -- sorry about the

8 pronunciation. Gniazdowski. Is that -- no?

9 MS. GNIAZDOWSKI: Not in the
10 ballpark, but --11 CHAIRMAN APPLE: I'm sorry. Your
12 name?13 MS. GNIAZDOWSKI: My name is
14 Lauren Gniazdowski, and I'm speaking on behalf of
15 the 266 Washington Avenue Tenants Association in
16 Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, which I'm a member and
17 co-organizer.18 We are a multi-generational,
19 multiracial group of rent-stabilized and
20 market-rate tenants, and we are united in our
21 demand for a rent freeze. For rent-stabilized
22 tenants like those in our building, this moment
23 feels like a vice tightening from both ends.24 On one side, we're up against A &
25 E Real Estate, an absentee corporate landlord known

1

2 for neglecting repairs, failing to provide
3 consistent heat, ignoring basic building
4 maintenance, and so much more neglect. On the
5 other side, we're facing yet another proposed rent
6 increase from this Board.

7 Enough is enough. We're already
8 stretched thin by rising grocery prices, utility
9 bills, and healthcare costs. A rent hike by this
10 Board, no matter how small, is not just a number on
11 a lease. It's the difference between staying in
12 our homes or being pushed out of the communities
13 we've helped build. Plus, our tenants have seen it
14 firsthand, as a lot of people have said tonight,
15 even as our rents go up, there's no reinvestment
16 into our building to maintain a basic quality of
17 life and habitability.

18 A rent freeze is both reasonable
19 and absolutely necessary. It's a tool for keeping
20 neighbors and working-class tenants housed,
21 preventing displacement, and preserving what's left
22 of affordable housing in New York City, which, as
23 we all know, happens to be the most expensive place
24 to live in the United States.

25 We demand that you vote to freeze

1

2 the rent because our homes, our stability, and our
3 communities are on the line.

4

(Applause.)

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

6

Simone Sempri, also Thelma
7 Hamilton, and Electra Holmes.

8

Simone, please.

9

MS. SEMPRI: Yes, my name is
10 Simone Sempri. I live in Borough Park, and I was
11 one of the tenants that had been evicted even
12 though I was paying my rent.

13

And I am here to talk about the
14 people who only make \$30,000 a year, 50,000 a year,
15 or even 40,000 a year. And the rent for one
16 apartment is \$2,400 or \$1,800. With that kind of
17 money they are making and with another rent
18 increase, I want to know how we can afford for that
19 8 percent increase you all are putting.

20

I am retired. I worked for
21 Maimonides Hospital for 24 years, and up to now, my
22 rent is so high that we had to get sanctioned.

23

So, putting another percentage of
24 increase on people again, how they will pay for it.
25 Are you all sending them to the street? So many

1

2 homeless that is in New York already? Are we
3 taking all that into consideration?

4

5 So I want the Board to take all
6 those things into consideration before they bring
7 that increase or put that increase on tenants.

8

9 Thank you.

10

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

13

14 Thelma Hamilton, Electra Holmes,
15 Shane Kennedy.

16

17 MS. HAMILTON: Hi. Good evening,
18 everyone. My name is Thelma Hamilton. And I'm
19 here this evening for, this is my first time, first
20 experience coming to a Rent Guidelines Board
21 meeting and this is fascinating. I realize now
22 that I have to join the fight.

23

24 (Applause.)

25

26 MS. HAMILTON: We have to fight.

27

28 I am retired. I have a husband
29 that is disabled. I have a son that has Down
30 syndrome, and I'm standing here, and I am looking
31 at the makeup of the Board. I'm checking the
32 makeup of the Board. And I don't see anyone that
33 represents even a disabled person that is on this

1

2 Board.

3

4 And the ratio of the makeup, it
5 already seems as if the Board is already stacked
6 against us. It's not fair. We are hardworking,
7 honest people in this community. And thank God for
8 Neighbors Helping Neighbors. For the chapter in
9 Sunset Park.

9

10 We got eviction notice from our
11 landlord, Maimonides Hospital. And they went to
12 Albany to lobby for millions of millions of
13 dollars. At the same time, they are putting out
14 people that worked, that they called heroes during
15 the pandemic. And because they realized they could
16 sell the building and make more money, they were
17 evicting us.

17

AUDIENCE: Shame.

18

19 MS. HAMILTON: Shame on them. I
20 trust and I hope that as you meet and have dialogue
21 and think about what is happening. I know you go
22 to bed at night and you sleep in a good apartment.
23 I know you sleep in a very nice bed. I know it's
24 not cold, it's not freezing. And you eat the very
25 best and you wear the very best.

25

So as you sit, please remember us

1

2 out here and I pray that next time that we come
3 back, that tenants will organize --

4

(Applause.)

5

MS. HAMILTON: -- that you will
6 organize and we will no more be tenants, but we
7 will buy some of these damn buildings that they
8 have. Let's do it because we can do it. Thank
9 you.

10

(Applause.)

11

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.
12 Thank you.

13

I just -- I just want to remind
14 everybody, if you haven't signed up to speak,
15 please to do so. It's now 7:39. We're going to go
16 till everybody speaks, but if you haven't signed up
17 by 8, you won't get that opportunity. So we
18 encourage you to do so.

19

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

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Electra Holmes,
22 Shane Kennedy, and Matt Bardi (phonetic).

23

Electra?

24

(No response.)

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: No, Electra.

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Let Ms. Holmes go, please. We'll get to you next. No? All right. We'll see if Electra comes back, we'll get her up.

Mr. Kennedy.

MR. KENNEDY: Hello. My name is Shane, and I'm a volunteer with the We Fight Back Coalition. So before us, it's a group of people who call themselves the Rent Guidelines Board, but based on its history of rulings, a more fitting name would be the Rent Increases Board.

Every year the RGB mandates a larger rate hike than the last. And this year's increase is of 8 percent is nearly double that of 2024. This proposal will put the cost of rent-stabilized housing, 17 percent above 2022. 17 percent. Do double-digit increases, sound rent-stabilized to everyone here?

AUDIENCE: No.

MR. KENNEDY: These insane hikes are coming alongside Trump's cutting of Medicaid and SNAP, which millions of New Yorkers depend on to survive. The MTA is increasing the fare to \$3. Groceries are 50 percent more expensive than last year. The cost of living is multiplying every

1

2 year. We cannot afford the rent as it is right
3 now.

4

One in five of us are not making
5 ends meet. 350,000 people, a third of which are
6 children, are either sleeping in shelters or on the
7 sidewalk every day.

8

How many more families will be
9 kicked from their homes because of the decision of
10 the RGB's nine unelected officials? How many more
11 years of increased living costs can we endure?

12

Workers make the city run and the
13 Board wants to put us out on the street. For the
14 RGB, based on your year-round research efforts, how
15 many more of us are you projecting to make homeless
16 with these rate hikes? Are we and our children
17 just acceptable sacrifices to appease your bosses?

18

And for the tenants who needs
19 landlords? We need landlords like trees need
20 termites. Like dogs need fleas. Landlords produce
21 nothing but take on average half of what we earn
22 every year. And still they demand more. Shame.

23

AUDIENCE: Shame.

24

MR. KENNEDY: We need a rent
25 freeze now to stop the bleeding. We as tenants are

1

2 70 percent of the New York City population. It's
3 time we start acting like it and demand the Rent
4 Guidelines Board, which represents the needs of the
5 tenants and is made up of tenants.

6 An RGB representing the people
7 would mandate rent based on our income, properly
8 maintained housing, justice against criminal
9 landlords, keeping all empty units available, and a
10 stop to the displacement of locals who have been
11 here for decades.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. KENNEDY: A better world is
14 possible and necessary, but we need to stand up,
15 work together, and fight for it. Unite. Fight.
16 Housing is a human right. Unite. Fight. Housing
17 is a human right.

18 (Audience participation.)

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

21 Matt Bardi, followed by Kate
22 Gonzalez and Meera Kuntawala (phonetic).

23 MR. BARDI: Good evening. My name
24 is Matt and I'm a tenant in Bushwick, Brooklyn.
25 I'm a member of Full Time Tenant Union, a union

1

2 group organizing tenants across one of many large
3 landlord portfolios in New York City.

4

Our landlord, Watermark Capital
5 Group, owns over 3000 residential units across the
6 city and has a long track record of neglect. In
7 their buildings, essential repairs are ignored
8 unless a tenant moves out. Then and only then they
9 make upgrades to raise the rent.

10

Watermark averages at least one
11 housing violation per unit, the majority of which
12 being lack of heat and hot water, pests, and
13 plumbing issues.

14

More than half of their units have
15 been destabilized in the last 10 years. This is
16 not stability; this is a business model that
17 profits off of displacement. Tenants are often the
18 only form of oversight when it comes to enforcing
19 rent stabilization. Many rent histories have gone
20 unregistered by landlords, creating serious gaps in
21 information. Too many of these cases units are
22 later marked permanently exempt, making it even
23 harder for tenants to understand or defend their
24 rights.

25

Our union members have won and are

1
2 in the process of winning cases against illegal
3 destabilization. However, too much of the burden
4 falls on renters to navigate a limited, slow DHCR
5 system while landlords erase rent histories and
6 sidestep accountability. And now the rent -- the
7 RGB is proposing another unprecedented increase.
8 These high increases reward neglectful tenants and
9 put thousands of working-class New Yorkers at risk
10 of losing their homes.

11 I'm calling for the -- for a full
12 rent freeze because without it, tenants will be
13 displaced and affordable housing will disappear one
14 unit at a time. It's already unavailable for a
15 whole generation of New Yorkers who are new to the
16 city or are looking to rent their first apartment.

17 It's also ineffective at keeping
18 housing affordable and livable for many community
19 members. The cycle of displacement and
20 unaffordable -- unaffordability must end. The Rent
21 Guidelines Board must choose tenants over
22 speculation by freezing the rent.

23 (Applause.)

24 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

25 Kate Gonzalez, Meera Kuntawala,

1

2 and Leah Bowers.

3

Ms. Gonzalez.

4

MS. GONZALEZ: Hello, everyone.

5

Hope you're having a good evening. Not those guys,
6 but you guys.

7

My name is Kate Gonzalez. I am a
8 member of the Party for Socialism and Liberation.
9 I'm also a resident at a rent-stabilized apartment
10 in Flatbush, but I'm also a born and raised New
11 Yorker. And so that means throughout my whole
12 life, I've watched families get displaced by rent
13 hikes and priced out of their communities.

14

And what a painful experience that
15 has been, right? We're all voicing our pain
16 tonight. The building that I grew up in the East
17 Village, was subsidized housing from the hospital
18 that my mom worked at. It was filled with
19 healthcare workers, primarily people of color. The
20 -- it's a place where I went trick or treat on
21 every floor where my cousins lived, just an
22 elevator right away -- sorry. Where I could wave
23 to my mom from the -- my living room window and she
24 would wave back to me from the hospital corridor
25 that she worked at. But greedy landlords tore down

1

2 that building, displacing hundreds of workers from
3 affordable and convenient housing.

4

AUDIENCE: Shame .

5

6 MS. GONGALEZ: Today it's a vacant
7 lot. The Starbucks -- where the local little shop
8 used to be is now a Starbucks. No one in my
9 neighborhood looks to like it anymore. And I think
10 we can all resonate with that as New Yorkers,
11 right?

11

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

12

13 MS. GONGALEZ: My sister and I all
14 still -- my sisters and I also still live in New
15 York. After years of trying, my sister finally won
16 the affordable housing lottery, but she still pays
17 the bulk of her paycheck for a small one-bedroom.
18 And that's just half the rent split with her
19 partner.

19

20 My other sister lives in a
21 rent-stabilized unit whose landlord illegally
22 tripled the rent before they moved in. And she and
23 her fiancé now live with rats in their walls and
24 neighbors find rats in their couches. Shame.

24

AUDIENCE: Shame.

25

MS. GONZALEZ: And these are the

1

2 affordable options given to us as New Yorkers,
3 right? Unaffordable housing lotteries, battered
4 buildings, and the whole building is gone in an
5 instant. Shame.

6

AUDIENCE: Shame.

7

MS. GONZALEZ: Why are we forced
8 to scramble to find housing that is clean, that is
9 dignified because we're dignified?

10

(Audience participation.)

11

MS. GONZALEZ: There are more than
12 26,000 rent-stabilized apartments kept off the
13 market by landlords who don't even want to bother
14 to fix them.

15

AUDIENCE: Shame.

16

MS. GONZALEZ: And that just shows
17 us we have enough to go around. We know we have
18 enough to go around because we make it possible.

19

(Audience participation.)

20

MS. GONZALEZ: And so here we're
21 taking time from our work days and to talk to you
22 people, but I'm going to talk to you guys because
23 it is worth taking our time to speak with each
24 other. It is worth taking time to spend time with
25 each other, to connect with each other because

1

2 these people are stealing our time. They're
3 stealing time with our families. They're stealing
4 time cooking food with groceries we can't even
5 afford.

6 So it's infuriating to be here
7 with these simple demands, asking for these simple
8 things from people who weren't even elected and
9 somehow have the power to make life unlivable for
10 millions of New Yorkers. And we know that this is
11 not what democracy looks like.

12 (Audience participation.)

13 MS. GONZALEZ: Like every tenant
14 here, we are here to say no to a rent hike, to
15 demand a rent freeze, and to protect our vulnerable
16 neighbors. But we are also here to say that life
17 should not be like this. The average age of
18 first-time homeowners went up by almost a decade.
19 So we'll be here long -- for a long time to haunt
20 you as renters. Am I right?

21 (Audience participation.)

22 MS. GONZALEZ: We'll be showing up
23 here every single day. I hope every tenant who is
24 here who resonates with our message joins us in
25 building a movement because we know what is

1

2 possible. We know what is possible in our lives.

3

4 And I hope to see you all on the
5 streets. Talk to us afterwards, we look forward to
6 speaking with you. That's why we're here today.
7 So I hope to see you soon.

8

9 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank
10 you very much. Meera Kuntawala, Leah Bowers, and
11 Julie Cobb .

12

13 MS. KUNTAWALA: Hi. Good evening,
14 everyone. Thank you so much to everyone who has
15 spoken. Especially Kate, right before me,
16 incredible.

17

18 I'm also a member of the Party for
19 Socialism and Liberation, and I'm also here as a
20 physician speaking on behalf of my patients, who
21 live in rent-stabilized apartments.

22

23 You, all the Rent Guidelines
24 Board, make decisions for a public that is not
25 represented by this Board. Other people have said
it, I'll say it again. Not by class, not by race,
not by gender. One person lives in a
rent-stabilized apartment, and she is a black
woman.

26

The only small justice here today

1
2 is that your influence could not buy you out of
3 having to sit here and listen to every single one
4 of these people's stories. I implore you to
5 consider how this business decision affects the
6 human beings that make this city what it is. The
7 New Yorkers, that make your food, keep your streets
8 clean, that build brick by brick your buildings,
9 that teach your children in school, that work
10 tirelessly, and deserve, at the very least, the
11 peace of not having an eviction threat or
12 homelessness plaguing them until what? They just
13 give up because it's their fault they're poor?

14 You were appointed, as it's been
15 pointed out many times today, to make decisions
16 that quite frankly make or break New Yorkers lives
17 and their safety in the city. We are all in this
18 room and we're smart enough to know that this is
19 not a fight between tenants and landlords.

20 Look around you who spoke today,
21 is that representative of a fight between tenants
22 and landlords? This is capitalistic greed versus
23 the working-class person. So we should probably
24 call it that.

25 (Audience participation.)

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MS. KUNTAWALA: You hold the power to either continue to support this limitless, baseless greed. There is no end to the greed.

FEMALE VOICE: There is no end.

MS. KUNTAWALA: Or you could make -- you could honestly blow everyone's mind and champion the majority, the people that make this city the greatest city in the world. I know you didn't personally cause these systemic issues, but you do have to sleep at night with the decisions that you make. Prove to us in this room that this forum is real and not a pitiful attempt at convincing us that this is a democratic process. Please choose people over profit. Thank you.

(Audience participation.)

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Leah Bowers, Julie Cobb, and Thomas Golgan. I can't quite read the writing.

Leah. Thank you.

MS. BOWERS: Hi. My name is Leah Bowers. I live in a rent-stabilized building in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. I've been living here for three years. I love this city and I'm deciding not to appeal to this Board tonight.

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I'm an active member of my
Neighborhood Block Association and Riders4Rights, a
mutual aid group that gives out free groceries and
clothes to Bed-Stuy neighbors every single month.

(Applause.)

MS. BOWERS: I'm thinking of them
in our community tonight. I can't believe I'm back
here a year later, asking them to freeze the rent
again. I thought we lived in stabilized housing.
Rents have increased year over year. How much
money do landlords need when they already own
multiple buildings, when I dream of owning just one
apartment?

I doubt they blink an eye at -- in
the grocery store when prices skyrocket. The
profits they make off our backs have risen while
our salaries have remained stagnant.

They go to the doctor without a
worry about how much that copay costs. They never
think about pulling back on their meds so they
don't run out before their next paycheck. These
are all things that many of us think about
budgeting with scrutiny to make due. But I doubt
the landlord-friendly board members up there really

1

2 heard a word that I said, but I think y'all did.

3 And we have a fight in us.

4

5 We're getting fired up by the
6 protests against ICE raids in LA in here.

6

(Applause.)

7

8 MS. BOWERS: By efforts to break
9 the siege and end the ongoing genocide in
10 Palestine.

10

(Applause.)

11

12 MS. BOWERS: To elect Zohran
13 Mamdani as our next New York City mayor to freeze
14 the rent --

14

(Applause.)

15

16 MS. BOWERS: -- and send all of
17 these landlord-backed Board members packing. The
18 fight is here. It is ongoing and we will win. We
19 will continue talking to each other, organizing,
20 pushing back, striking, boycotting, and building
21 our communities. A rent freeze will come. That is
22 within our power.

22

(Applause.)

23

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

24

25 I just want to remind anybody who
hasn't signed up yet to please sign up before 8

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2 o'clock, but thank you.

3

Julie Cobb.

4

THE INTERPRETER: (Translating

5

from English to Spanish.)

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

7

Julie Cobb, Thomas Golgan, and

8

Robert Harris.

9

MR. GOLGAN: Thomas Golgan.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Golgan. I'm

11

sorry. One second. Julie Cobb.

12

(No response.)

13

CHAIRMAN APPLE: No. Well, if she

14

comes back, please let us know and we'll get her

15

up. Sir?

16

MR. GOLGAN: Good evening. I am a

17

rent-stabilized tenant living in Park Slope for

18

over 35 years. I have watched my small eight-unit

19

building shrink from eight rent-stabilized

20

apartments to three on a block which has largely

21

been decimated in terms of rent-stabilized

22

apartments as they went co-op or condo. In other

23

words, I've watched my community change

24

substantially, to say the least.

25

Frankly, the Rent Guidelines Board

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2 has been beyond disappointing over the years. In
3 fact, it's been a fairly outrageous process. I
4 would say that your Board should really be renamed
5 the Community Destabilization Board.

6

(Applause.)

7

MR. GOLGAN: In theory, at least,
8 we were told when this was -- when this Board was
9 formed back in the early seventies that this Board
10 would help to stabilize communities. Clearly, it
11 has not worked to that effect. And there's been
12 any number of, I would say very thoughtful,
13 heartfelt testimonies from my mostly working-class
14 neighbors tonight, indicating that really if you
15 folks had any decency, you would all resign
16 tonight.

17

(Applause.)

18

MR. GOLGAN: You would go back to
19 Mayor Adams and say, Sir, we cannot in good
20 conscience raise any rents in this city. Not this
21 year, not next, not the year after, where it's time
22 for a permanent rent freeze during the current
23 administration at least.

24

And frankly, my opinion is we
25 really should have a serious rent rollback. Thank

1

2 you.

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(Applause.)

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

5

Robert Harris, Bruno Daniel, and

6

Ivana Patton (phonetic).

7

Mr. Harris.

8

MR. HARRIS: Yes. Okay. So, --

9

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir

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11

MR. HARRIS: My name is Robert

12

Harris. I began living in Midwood --

13

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Closer in, sir.

14

MR. HARRIS: My name is Robert

15

Harris. I began living in Midwood in 1985 with my

16

son and wife. My rent was \$505, now it's nearly

17

1,700.

18

I'm 81 and a widower. My Social

19

Security doesn't cover my rent. My son

20

contributes, so I cannot freeze my rent. Anyone

21

over 80 or anyone senior should have their rent

22

frozen by the rent freeze guidelines --

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(Applause.)

24

MR. HARRIS: -- it doesn't matter

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that someone is helping to support their rent.

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I urge the Board to implement a rent freeze. The data is unequivocal. Nearly 40 percent of rent-stabilized tenants spend over half their income on rent. The CPI in New York City rose by 6.1 percent. The highest increase since 1981. Wages have not kept pace. Electricity has surged 12.5 percent.

Before raising rents, the city should get landlords to stop withholding 20 to 40,000 apartments yearly off-market and publish turnover rates. We don't know how many apartments are turned over.

Since 2019, they shouldn't be turned over at all, yet landlords are still harassing tenants and getting them to move out. Why? They can't raise the rents if tenants move out as far as I know, but they still want to get them out. They need the practice; they don't know how to get them out if the laws change.

How much of HPD's billion-plus budget is caused by landlords' lack of action? How many times have HPD come to my apartment for one complaint? Stop the waste and fraud of landlords.

In 1985, my landlord had a few

1

2 buildings; now he has 50. How did that happen? If
3 he can't -- if he can't make ends meet.

4

(Applause).

5

MR. HARRIS: They should not get a
6 rent increase while rent while -- housing prices
7 increase, and the wealth transfers to them. Net
8 operating income increased by 8 percent between
9 2022 and '23. The two-year fed funds rate is 4
10 percent. So obviously, it pays to own buildings.

11

The growth -- this growth was
12 consistent with 83 percent of city community
13 districts. The sales price per unit for
14 rent-stabilized buildings has risen.

15

I don't have time to list the
16 actions my landlord engages in to encourage tenants
17 to move, including actively neglecting. Having the
18 ability to safeguard my wife's health. No, he
19 didn't do that. He wouldn't let us move to another
20 apartment. And my wife died basically because when
21 they instituted the rule that the landlords changed
22 the oil from 6 percent, which caused asthma, to a
23 safer oil, he didn't do that. And my wife,
24 according to our pulmonologist, contracted
25 bronchiectasis because of that.

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(Audience participation.)

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AUDIENCE: Shame.

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(Audience participation.)

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MR. HARRIS: AI is going to --

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CHAIR: Thank you, sir.

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MR. HARRIS: -- AI is going to come in and wipe all of you out, and then you won't be able to make your 6,200 a year.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir. Bruno Daniel, followed by Ivana Patton, and Anorak Reed (phonetic).

Mr. Daniel.

MR. DANIEL: Hello, Rent Guidelines Board. My name is Bruno Daniel, and I am here to testify on behalf of Brooklyn Borough President, Antonio Reynoso, and in turn alongside Brooklyn Tenants. Thank you all so much for being here.

There's been a lot of talk this year about data and making sure that the Board makes these decisions based on numbers. Borough President Reynoso agrees. That's why our team has created a comprehensive plan for Brooklyn to guide all of our offices work. And we can confirm that the data shows that it's time to freeze the rent.

Here are just a few relevant numbers; the majority of Brooklynites who rent are rent burdened, defined by the fact that they pay

1

2 more than 30 percent of their income toward rent.

3 Worse, about 30 percent of Brooklyn renters are

4 severely rent-burdened, meaning they pay more than

5 50 percent of their income on rent.

6 Meanwhile, median rents in the

7 Borough continue to rise.

8 (Audience participation.)

9 MR. DANIEL: Thank you all.

10 Housing vacancy in Brooklyn is at 1.27 percent even

11 lower than the citywide average of 1.41 percent.

12 Which itself is the lowest it's been since 1968 and

13 much lower than what experts call a healthy vacancy

14 rate, defined between 5 to 8 percent. This means

15 it is increasingly difficult to find an apartment,

16 let alone an affordable one.

17 As you have heard from others

18 here, the cost of everything else is going up, too.

19 Making it even harder to afford rent. For example,

20 about a quarter of Brooklynites, disproportionately

21 low- and moderate-income folks, are

22 energy-burdened, meaning they pay more than 6

23 percent of their income just to keep the lights and

24 the gas on. These numbers have real consequences

25 for our neighborhoods.

1

2 10 percent of Brooklyn's black
3 community has left the borough since 2010.

4 AUDIENCE: Shame.

5 MR. DANIEL: For all these
6 reasons, keeping rent-regulated units affordable is
7 one of the most important tools we have to keep the
8 city vibrant and diverse. The Board already
9 acknowledged this by rolling back its planned
10 increase for two-year leases.

11 Brooklyn Borough President Reynoso
12 is calling on the Board to go further, reject the
13 proposed rate increases, and implement a rent
14 freeze. The Board's own data shows that landlords
15 can handle it.

16 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

17 MR. DANIEL: The Board's own data
18 shows that landlords can handle it.

19 Despite increasing costs, their
20 net operating income continues to go up outside of
21 a handful of neighborhoods. Let's give tenants a
22 break this year and help ensure that Brooklynites
23 can stay in the Borough we love, raise our
24 families, and grow old here without fear of
25 displacement. Thank you all.

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(Applause.)

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

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Ivana Patton --

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MS. PATTON: I'm fine.

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- Anorak Reed --

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I'm sorry. And Amy Collado (phonetic).

8

Please.

9

MS. PATTON: Hi. My name is

10

Ivana. I live in a rent-stabilized apartment in

11

South Slope.

12

Nyc.gov defines rent stabilization

13

as a form of rent regulation that helps combat the

14

city's housing crisis by making sure some units are

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made affordable.

16

And so my question is, what the

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hell is affordable? About a 9 percent increase

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over three years. What is stable about squeezing

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people deeper into poverty? The only stable thing

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this Board has brought is profit for incompetent

21

landlords.

22

The people who are here today are

23

the life of New York. We are the working-class

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people, people who run this fucking city, that

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landlords love to romanticize on the street easy.

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(Audience participation.)

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MS. PATTON: Without us, the city is nothing and yet we're treated like trash. Stuck with roaches, black mold, broken heaters, and expect to say thank you for your stable increases.

Respectfully, screw that and please freeze the rent. Thank you.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

Anorak -- I'm not sure. Writing Reed or RH. I'm not sure. Amy Collado.

MS. COLLADO: What did you say?

MS. COLLADO: Collado.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Collado. Sorry.

I apologize. And Natasha Singh.

Anorak, please.

MR. REED: Yeah. Hi. My name is

Anorak, and I live in a rent-stabilized apartment in South Slope.

We live in unprecedented times.

Our communities are under attack. As a transgender immigrant, like many others in this city, I'm scared. We are scared of losing access to healthcare. We are scared of being abducted. We

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2 are scared of losing our homes. We are scared of
3 losing our jobs. We are being terrorized by the
4 wealthy. This is not class warfare; it is class
5 terrorism.

6

MALE VOICE: Yes.

7

MR. REED: I was once proud of
8 living in New York City. It used to be a safe
9 harbor. The city of dreams, the city that never
10 sleeps.

11

Now, it feels like the city that
12 never sleeps because we have nightmares about how
13 much it costs to have a roof over your head.

14

(Audience participation.)

15

MR. REED: There's a reason why
16 there's not a single landlord here for testimony.
17 Because they're out there enjoying their Monday
18 night getting wine drunk on the backs of the
19 suffering of the working class, making jokes,
20 asking us to work harder to follow the law.

21

(Applause.)

22

MR. REED: Well, how about we ask
23 you to follow your humanity; if you have any? This
24 is your chance to stand with the community, to
25 stand for something, to grow a fucking spine. You

1

2 have the opportunity -- no, you have the duty to
3 preserve New York City's sanctity, not the comforts
4 of landlord freeze the goddam --

5

AUDIENCE: Rent.

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CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

7

(Applause.)

8

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Amy Collado --

9

MS. COLLADO: Thank you.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- Natasha Singh

11

and Nathan Lewis (phonetic).

12

Please.

13

MS. COLLADO: Okay. So my name is

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Amy Collado (foreign language) as it's pronounced

15

in Spanish. And I'm a tenant organizer that has

16

been working in Bushwick for a year, but I've been

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organizing in Queens for nine years.

18

And so I was trying to think about

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what is it that I want to say up here because I've

20

been doing this for as long as I've been

21

organizing. And it's exhausting.

22

It's also really hard to convince

23

people that this is a place they can come to use

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their voice. And so I figured I'd come here as a

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rent-stabilized tenant. So I live in an apartment

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2 that is supposed to be a historical district with
3 -- which the landlord uses often as a way to not
4 make any repairs.

5

He collects his rent and just as
6 everyone has already mentioned, makes no repairs.
7 We have leaks in our apartments. We have leaks in
8 the hallway. Every few months we actually get a
9 notice from ConEd that says your service is going
10 to be taken away because the landlord's not paying
11 that bill. Which is really embarrassing because
12 they also post in front of your building.

13

There was a -- last summer we were
14 actually without lights in the front of our
15 apartment building and in all of the hallways for
16 three months during the summertime. We actually
17 had to hang lights, like Christmas lights, from the
18 top floor through the -- through the staircase and
19 like the only light source that we had for three
20 months.

21

Mind you, this Board has voted for
22 an increase every single year. The last time that
23 we experienced a rent freeze it's almost going to
24 be a decade. It's insane. It's insane to think
25 that we have to come here every year to prove to

1

2 y'all that the bogus numbers that you have doesn't
3 match the reality. We're here because we're
4 telling you that landlords aren't doing what
5 they're supposed to do. So why reward them? What
6 is it about landlords that makes them so special
7 that they can't actually feel the brunt of the
8 businesses they decided to get into?

9 This is our home we're talking
10 about. We have to live in them. We have to live
11 with leaks. We have to live with mold. We have to
12 figure it out. We have to fix things ourselves,
13 and it's exhausting. And then on top of that, we
14 have to come every day, hopeful to convince other
15 people to do this work. This room is empty, not
16 because people don't need to be here, but because
17 this is a pointless process. And they know it, and
18 the landlords know it.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. COLLADO: When I first started
21 organizing, landlords used to come out, and of
22 course, we didn't let them get a few words in.
23 That's the point. But this is a public forum for
24 them just as much as us. And just like in housing
25 court, they don't come out because they don't need

1

2 to, because money is what's moving y'all.

3

(Applause.)

4

5 MS. COLLADO: And at the end of
6 the day, as somebody who -- no matter how much I
7 find it exhausting to be an organizer because we
8 have to find the hope and the will - .

8

FEMALE VOICE: Right.

9

10 MS. COLLADO: -- to convince
11 people that you have to be here.

11

FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

12

13 MS. COLLADO: This is your
14 process. It's not given; it is a law that we
15 fought for. People just like us, fought for. They
16 came here and said we have rights.

16

(Applause.)

17

18 MS. COLLADO: We can't give up on
19 that.

19

20 But I will say, I understand that
21 who I'm speaking to is not our amazing tenant
22 representative because that's why I didn't stand on
23 that side. I don't need to talk to y'all, okay?

23

24 And you know what? The owner reps
25 y'all do what y'all do, it's fine. Those public
members, you need to start acting like public

1

2 members and respecting what's happening in this
3 room, okay?

4

(Applause.)

5

MS. COLLADO: We need to have more
6 representation in those public members. Y'all need
7 to stop being these bogus' professors that's
8 teaching students one thing and voting for
9 something else on the stage.

10

(Applause.)

11

MS. COLLADO: At the end of the
12 day, what we're saying is we need a rent freeze.
13 We don't want it, we need it. What landlords don't
14 need is more money in their pockets to keep buying
15 up homes that we should be owners of.

16

Vote for a rent freeze.

17

(Applause.)

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank
19 you, ma'am.

20

Natasha Singh, Nathan Lewis, and
21 Nico Torres.

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MS. SINGH: First off, I think the
23 Board should apologize for wasting all of our time
24 tonight.

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(Audience participation.)

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MS. SINGH: We've been here for three-plus hours. How many more sad stories would you like to hear, to tell you what everyone's been telling you nonstop, which is to freeze the rent. How many more notes do you have to have in your notepad? If I see one more of your writing notes in your notepad when everybody has been saying the same goddam thing, which is freeze the rent.

And you're lucky that we're just asking to freeze the rent.

(Audience participation.)

MS. SINGH: Because let me tell you a time where the landlords did the exact opposite and decreased the rent, COVID, when they thought that people were fleeing the city and the city was dead. They were begging us to stay in the buildings.

(Applause.)

MS. SINGH: "Let's give you 13 months instead of 12 months. Let's decrease the rent. Please, stay in the building." And then what did they do? Swing it back the other way with double-digit increases.

So I know the landlords have the

1

2 money. Christina hasn't looked like she's wanted
3 to be here the entire night. We keep picking on
4 you because you're not paying attention. Robert
5 has been writing notes nonstop. What are writing,
6 Robert? What are you writing with your pen? Put
7 the pen down and listen to us. So I'm not going to
8 talk to them because they don't care that we're
9 here.

10 We're begging. How much more
11 begging do you want us to do? We are begging the
12 federal government not to send our money to commit
13 a genocide halfway across the world.

14 (Audience participation.)

15 MS. SINGH: We're begging the city
16 government not to put our money into the NYPD, who
17 spends their time terrorizing us. And now you want
18 us to beg to nine people on a stage, not to improve
19 the conditions, but to allow landlords to continue
20 being the same level of terrible.

21 Once again, you are lucky that
22 we're just asking to freeze the rent. You have
23 asked babies, you have asked the children out here
24 to become experts on tenant laws --

25 AUDIENCE: Shame.

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MS. SINGH: -- instead of going out there and being children. They should be outside playing in what has been a very bizarre summer season thus far. But regardless, they shouldn't be here on a Monday night in a government building begging nine adults to see their humanity. So shame on that.

AUDIENCE: Shame.

MS. SINGH: So I'm going to turn around because they don't really deserve to see my face. And I'm going to talk to the most powerful people in the room; renters.

(Applause).

MS. SINGH: My name is Natasha Singh. I've been privileged enough to live in this city for the better part of 10 years. I have lived with family, I have had a complicated experience living in a rent-stabilized apartment, and finally, I had the opportunity to purchase my home in 2020.

And I will tell you how I did it. I stopped paying rent to my landlords for eight months. It turns out we spend a lot of money on rent, enough for a down payment, actually. And that building was incredibly poorly managed and the

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2 last time I checked, it's still standing. So trust
3 me, those landlords were fine without my thousands
4 upon thousands of dollars. I can tell you that.

5 And let me tell you who don't have
6 to deal with increases, homeowners, because not
7 only do we receive various tax breaks for owning,
8 but in the United States, you can lock in mortgage
9 rates for 30 years. I'm originally from Australia
10 and you cannot do that. It is a variable interest
11 rate --

12 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

13 MS. SINGH: -- you have to match
14 the market every four months.

15 So, what do I ask is fair about
16 this process? Begging the hardest working people
17 in the city to come here in the building and say,
18 we simply want a rent freeze. I come --

19 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

20 MS. SINGH: -- here in solidarity
21 with my community, the majority of whom rent
22 because it is not a fair process that I was in the
23 right time, in the right place, and out of my mind
24 to own.

25 So what I say is that we're a

1

2 vibrant community here in New York, full of artists
3 and culture and love. And we should spend our time
4 doing that instead of begging nine people that
5 don't give a shit about us to freeze the rent. But
6 you should do the bare minimum and freeze the rent,
7 please.

8

(Applause) .

9

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank
10 you, ma'am.

11

(Audience participation.)

12

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Nathan Lewis,
13 Nico Torres, and Julia Esterline.

14

Nathan Lewis, please.

15

MR. LEWIS: Good evening. So,
16 yeah, I'm a rent-stabilized tenant in the Tenants
17 Association of 715 St. Marks Avenue. And a member
18 of the Crown Heights Tenants Union.

19

So I want to start by saying that
20 a sign of a healthy society is reflected in how we
21 treat our elderly, our disabled population, and our
22 children.

23

And I want to put it clear that by
24 raising the rent, you are directly attacking the
25 elderly, the disabled population, and the children

1

2 of this city.

3

(Applause.)

4

MR. LEWIS: And because of this,
5 we're all collectively losing our humanity overseen
6 by this Board. And we can't afford to do that, and
7 that's why we must continue to fight.

8

So my building was purchased by a
9 landlord that's actually already been mentioned
10 today, Michael Niamonitakis. And this follows a
11 pattern of extremely wealthy landlords buying up
12 rent-stabilized buildings. And then, since the
13 purchase, we've all seen the rapid deterioration of
14 the building. There's been a severe rat
15 infestation throughout the building. My elderly
16 neighbor above me she couldn't use the -- her
17 kitchen for a whole year.

18

FEMALE VOICE: Shame.

19

MR. LEWIS: We had -- we heard the
20 rats in our -- in our walls. And even after --
21 even still, she's still in a house in court for
22 this. And guess what? The landlords don't show up
23 to the house in court.

24

The trash compactors have been
25 broken for over seven years. There is frequently

1

2 mold. All of these issues we've already heard
3 today.

4

So yeah, we've tried every tactic.
5 We've been to the courts. We know that -- we've
6 tried every legal playbook we can and we've
7 realized how rotten corrupt this system is.

8

And I think we've all come to a
9 conclusion today that this unelected Board that
10 stands before us shouldn't be -- is the embodiment
11 of this whole corrupt system.

12

So I want to end by quickly saying
13 a quick thing that hopefully the Board knows about
14 basic math, which is exponential increase. 5
15 percent of 1000 is 50. Guess what? 5 percent of
16 2000 is 100.

17

How many times have we already
18 raised the rent? If we continue to do this, you --
19 and the thing is - yeah, we continue to do this,
20 and if we increase the -- if we raise the percent
21 even more, that number is just going to increase.

22

So yeah, I think if we don't get
23 -- I want to ask again for a rent freeze, and if we
24 don't get that to after today, then we know this
25 whole thing is a sham.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

4

Nico Torres, Julia Esterline, and

5

Bradley Esterline.

6

Nico Torres, please.

7

MS. TORRES: Good evening. Thank

8

you for being here. I just want to make sure we're

9

clear about one thing, which is that these empty

10

seats don't mean apathy or compliance or

11

indifference. These seats are empty because people

12

are working second, third, and fourth jobs --

13

(Applause.)

14

MS. TORRES: -- to pay their

15

already unsustainable rent. I'm racking up credit

16

card debt, and it's not on fun vacations and nice

17

restaurants. It's to buy groceries and like

18

tampons and shit.

19

So I guess I'll work backwards

20

and start by thanking you in advance for surprising

21

us and for making the humanitarian choice, for

22

making the radical choice, for making the very

23

obvious choice. Y'all look really tired. Well

24

done.

25

(Applause.)

1

2

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

3

Julia Esterline, Bradley

4

Esterline, and Andrea Robinson.

5

MS. ESTERLINE: Good evening,

6

everybody.

7

AUDIENCE: Good evening.

8

MS. ESTERLINE: All of your

9

tenants sound really good, but I'm going to make

10

mine a little short because thank God I don't have

11

too much trouble. I lived in Park Slope for 65

12

years. The first time I lived in a rent-stabilized

13

building but I joined Met Council in 2019. And

14

they were very helpful for me, helping us out

15

because the landlords trying to overcharge rent. I

16

drew them down from 600 -- from 650 to 600.

17

So I went to Met Council and asked

18

them, is that good? They say something was wrong.

19

I said, what could be wrong?

20

And by the way, my parents were

21

the landlords also, but they weren't crude to

22

people -- to tenants. They didn't be greedy. They

23

be (unintelligible) to do the right thing, and you

24

live long because God don't love ugly.

25

So what happened was, I -- she

1
2 said something's wrong. I said, "What could be
3 wrong? I didn't know." So she -- they -- that
4 time Met Council had a lot of papers that you can
5 fill out. So they helped me fill it out to find
6 out the landlord had overcharged us. And she said,
7 then you'll go and put an overcharge application.
8 And we did. He had a chance to claim it and he
9 never did. So we learned from that. And then in
10 the courthouse is really bad because you treat they
11 people bad and that's not right. That's ugly what
12 they do to people.

13 We won the case and that rent was
14 frozen for 32 years.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. ESTERLINE: And so 32 years.
17 But what I -- we got a smart landlord being smart,
18 saying that DCHR told them that -- how you call
19 that what they call -- that the go back on the rent
20 -- roll back on the rent.

21 So now he was lying also but I'm
22 going to find out because DC had a right to write
23 us and say that they gave the landlord to
24 overcharge it. He didn't finish it with the work.

25 So anyway, when I started out with

1

2 Met Council, I'd understand and I watched how they
3 do. And (unintelligible) plaza, I was there and I
4 spoke down there is how many people was a -- a
5 tenant on that panel.

6 Now I'm asking again, this is
7 2025. How many tenants are on that panel?

8 And I stirred up the nation over
9 there because they went crazy. They had to order
10 in the court because nobody never asked that
11 question. How many tenants is on that panel? Now
12 y'all look at me like I'm crazy. How many people
13 are tenants up there?

14 (Audience participation.)

15 MS. ESTERLINE: Come on. Stand
16 up. Stand up.

17 CHAIRMAN APPLE: There are two.

18 MS. ESTERLINE: Stand up. Don't
19 be scared. Stand up. Stand up. Stand up. Stand
20 up. Stand up.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. ESTERLINE: The reason why I
23 said that when I made that back in '89 to '90, they
24 stand up and then they got off the platform because
25 they didn't like what was going on. I told them to

1

2 get back on the platform, don't worry but they did
3 see everything go right.

4

Now the tenant over here -- one
5 tenant over here. Before I recall when I was with
6 my parents, they didn't have no board and everybody
7 lived good, and they didn't go up on the rent.

8

So why are you doing this now?
9 And I was here last year, I met with every
10 colleagues. And you had a lot of disabled that I
11 had never saw before. And with summer when we came
12 back for your due the decision, when y'all was
13 making so much noise and hurting the colleagues.
14 We couldn't hear. But you all did the same thing,
15 you went up on the rent.

16

So you didn't care about the
17 disabled people, which you should because you never
18 know who might be able. Always treat people right.
19 That's my parents said and my grandmother.

20

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

21

MS. ESTERLINE: You got to treat
22 people right because God do not love ugly.

23

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

24

MS. ESTERLINE: And I thank God
25 for everything and there's a real God up in heaven,

1

2 okay?

3

(Audience participation.)

4

MS. ESTERLINE: So you all should

5

-- if you're not going to do that for me and the

6

mayor's wrong because the mayor hire y'all and then

7

I think the president hire y'all. And that's

8

wrong. Like I said before. I'm glad you've two

9

there but you got to wake up and think. And let

10

them know five tenants and five landlords, okay?

11

That's -- I said that back in '89.

12

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

13

MS. ESTERLINE: Okay.

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

15

MS. ESTERLINE: So do that.

16

Another thing, tenants, y'all have to hold your

17

official leaders accountable and don't vote for

18

Eric Adams and Cuomo.

19

(Applause.)

20

MS. ESTERLINE: Okay. Don't do

21

that at all. But you got to go to the office,

22

don't be scared. Carry some tenants to your

23

legislator and find out. We don't want no Board

24

because you're not doing nothing for the people and

25

for the disability, too, also don't have that.

1

2

(Applause.)

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MS. ESTERLINE: Get on top of the Board. And if you got a union, go with the unions up to Albany because they'll go every year. They didn't do nothing this year. Every year, have a city worker retiree from the Board of Education.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ma'am.

MS. ESTERLINE: So do that -- get wherever city you work for --

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We have a lot more speakers, ma'am.

MS. ESTERLINE: -- or state, go work on --

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We have a lot more speakers.

MS. ESTERLINE: -- on your -- on the legislator. Because that's important to get them straight because they lie and say one thing, then they'll do another, okay? You know that.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay.

MS. ESTERLINE: Okay. You all have a blessed night.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: A lot more -- thank you so much, ma'am. Thank you.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

4

Winsome Pendergrass.

5

MR. ROBINSON: No.

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: No. I'm sorry.

7

One second.

8

Sir, your name?

9

MR. ROBINSON: Andrea Robinson.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay. We were

11

waiting. Yeah, we had called Mr. Robinson up. So

12

let's go and then we'll get to the other. Please,

13

sir, .

14

MR. ROBINSON: My name is Andrea

15

Robinson, and I serve as the manager of Constituent

16

Services and Community Impact for New York City

17

Council member, Crystal Hudson. And I would like

18

to read the following statement on her behalf.

19

"Good evening. As the New York

20

City Council member for the 35th District,

21

representing the neighborhoods of Fort Greene,

22

Clinton Hill, Crown Heights, and Prospect Heights,

23

I once again call on the Rent Guidelines Board to

24

stand up and do exactly what working-class New

25

Yorkers have demanded for years. Freeze the rent.

1

2 Time and again, New Yorkers have clear in their
3 opposition to the Rent Guidelines Board's proposed
4 rent increases to rent-stabilized units.

5

Tenants have gathered repeatedly
6 at public hearings across the five boroughs to
7 testify about the material effects such increases
8 would have on them and their communities.

9

Right now the cost of goods has
10 jumped 3 percent since last year, including 2.5
11 percent for food, 2.8 percent for Medicare, and
12 infamously, 36.8 percent for eggs. Meanwhile, real
13 average hourly earnings jumped only 1.4 percent
14 since last year. Rendering those wages increases
15 moot.

16

Again, the testimony of renters
17 and the backdrop of unprecedented inflation, the
18 Rent Guidelines Board has one reasonable decision
19 it can make. Rejecting any rent increase on both
20 one- and two-year leases. Any action otherwise is
21 negligent and irresponsible.

22

As Chair of the Council Committee
23 on Aging, I am appalled by any increase which will
24 force hundreds of thousands of older adults living
25 in rent-stabilized units to spend even more of

1

2 their fixed income on rent. The vast majority of
3 whom are already moderately or severely
4 rent-burdened.

5 As is always the case, our black,
6 brown, poor, and working-class communities will
7 bear the brunt of this decision and will be among
8 the first to be evicted. And in any state with
9 limited Good Cause -- Good Cause Protections and a
10 city with an underfunded Right-to-Counsel Program
11 there is little pride for our neighbors.

12 Two years ago, as a result of this
13 Board's decision, rent-stabilized tenants
14 experienced the largest rent increase they've seen
15 in nearly a decade.

16 This year, we must ensure it is
17 not more of the same. Under this administration,
18 your Board has approved rent increases totaling 9
19 percent over the past three years. Yet, the
20 mayor's predecessors froze rent three times in
21 2015, 2016, and 2020. The costs are rising for
22 everyone and there is no reason rent-stabilized
23 tenants should be ones to bear the brunt.

24 Once again, I urge you to reject
25 any rent increase this year. The future of our

1

2 city depends on it." Thank you.

3

(Applause.)

4

CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you,

5

sir.

6

Do we have Mr. Esterline? I'm

7

sorry. Please, sir.

8

MR. ESTERLINE: Hello. All right.

9

I'm Mr. Bradley Esterline. I'm 85 years old. I

10

live in Park Slope with my sister for 65 years. I

11

just retired from the city last year at the age of

12

84. But anyway, it was good that I went to work

13

because all day long, my apartment from October to

14

May is cold. And it was so weird for me to go and

15

stay warm all day -- all day long or either I had

16

to go to a senior center.

17

And it's just unfair that -- it's

18

bad enough that I wear braces on both legs. I have

19

two canes that I normally walk with and I climbed

20

three flights of steps each day going and coming,

21

just to go in my apartment to stay warm, have to

22

come out and go somewhere else to be warm all day

23

in the wintertime. So that was the blessing that I

24

was continued to go to work.

25

Now I'm here at 85 years old. I'm

1

2 a nurse for 40 years and now I'm thinking about
3 going back to work so I can be warm during the day.
4 Now we call our landlord, he doesn't give us no
5 heat. He said he has this monitor that in each
6 apartment they could see if they're hot or cold or
7 what is -- the problem is. Okay.

8 You guys, you don't have to deal
9 with this, but there is a God that oversees all of
10 us and he's going to do us all the same, okay? And
11 you'll get homes now. You don't know what's going
12 to happen tomorrow, okay? You might be in an
13 apartment tomorrow and suffering like the same
14 things we are, but I hope it never come to that. I
15 don't wish that on anybody. I don't wish on
16 anybody that payment -- and that payment has to
17 stay in the apartment that is cold.

18 And when you call 311, they -- in
19 the landlord's pockets. Now, its three days that
20 the landlord have to do whatever he want. If I
21 call today, I won't see nobody until Thursday or
22 Friday. They would tell the landlord that this
23 apartment is cold.

24 So, you see? So, you -- no one is
25 helping the tenants. When you are going to start

1

2 helping the tenants. Okay? If you don't want to
3 freeze the rent, reduce the percentage, okay? It's
4 -- a lot of people have low incomes. They can't
5 afford it.

6 You guys making hundreds of
7 thousands of dollars, so I guess it doesn't matter
8 to you because you don't -- you don't feel
9 anything. But all you are in the landlord's
10 pocket. See, that's the thing. That is what I
11 would like to know, and of course, you're not going
12 to tell me that --

13 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

14 MR. ESTERLINE: -- are not paying
15 anything under the table. But God bless you and to
16 everybody in this room, I wish you all a Happy
17 Father's Day. God bless.

18 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.
19 Thank you very much, sir. Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Cynthia Norris
22 and Winsome Pendergrass.

23 Cynthia, I think in the back,
24 right? Come on. Come on down, please.

25 And can I -- Ramona Kearns, next

1

2 after Cynthia and Winsome.

3

Please, ma'am.

4

5 MS. NORRIS: Okay. Good evening,
6 folks. It's been a long night, and I was ready for
7 you all, but to be honest, the kids are driving me
8 nuts because they're tired of hearing the same
9 thing over and over again about freezing the rent.
10 I'm not sure if you guys getting the word across,
11 but they're tired, right?

11

12 I've been living in the
13 rent-stabilized apartment for over a decade. And
14 just my daughter --

14

(Unintelligible cross-talk.)

15

16 MS. NORRIS: -- she's -- she's now
17 two, but when she just came home from the hospital,
18 we had no heat, no hot water, no gas for four
19 months. And I was breastfeeding, and the milk
20 would stop coming down because of no hot water. So
21 when you're breastfeeding, I do see a lot of milk
22 at the table, but here it is. Like when you
23 breastfeeding, you have to have the water on your
24 breast so that it can keep pouring out, right? It
25 gets locked up if you don't have heat.

25

And if you are in the winter time

1

2 -- she was born in February, and it was wintertime,
3 freezing outside, no heat in the apartment, so my
4 body is freezing, I'm cold. And I'm not able to
5 produce the milk to feed her. And also, I'm
6 getting sick thinking about it, and I also have
7 asthma and I'm not even getting enough heat.

8 I was -- I was miserable. I was
9 depressed because I couldn't feed my child, I had
10 no heat, I have two kids, I'm cooking on a pot like
11 whatever the plugin pot, whatever you call it, a
12 hot pot. And it was just like the shit was just
13 happening day by day. And then like, I don't --
14 it's only four of us in our house.

15 So, imagine cooking on a pot with
16 somebody who have six kids. My neighbor, Rachel,
17 she have six kids. To cook for all those people on
18 two stones, two hot plates. That should take
19 forever.

20 I'm just being honest. And I'm
21 not just sitting there just talking about just the
22 hot plates. The more important part is that, like
23 we are human, right? We are not just a number out
24 there, just to raise the rent up on somebody that
25 you can kill.

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What if I wouldn't have been able to produce milk? What if I not have a family nearby to go to their house? Some people don't have nobody. All they have is their children.

I was lucky to walk up to the block to go to my mom house to pour hot water on my breasts to bring the milk down. But if I'm already stressed, I'm not eating enough, I'm not going to produce no milk. Because after I leave that hot shower, I have to go back in that cold ass bed, to go to sleep. To even function, to deal with two kids, to do homework, to take him to school. And it was just like -- but you want to raise the rent still.

And I'm still -- and I'm still not having the regular amenities in my apartment. Heat is a right. Gas, come on. I have to eat to be able to -- to be able to make sure I can pay this rent and then get the slap on --

And all you're doing is like you calling 311, you calling down the rent office, and nothing is changing. Nothing. And we have two buildings. We're left with no heat, no hot water. They're in the midst, its freezing.

1
2 And it was shame. It was just
3 like, I don't know what to tell my child, the milk
4 isn't going to come. I don't -- like we -- I'm not
5 getting free milk from nowhere else. So like,
6 listen, if it's in -- and I know I'm talking about
7 milk, but this all ties into -- every time I know
8 you guys heard so many stories about the ceiling is
9 falling, the mold, the pipes, the heat, the hot
10 water.

11 We got to -- we got to do
12 something. We giving all the money we got, working
13 two and three jobs to produce this. What are you
14 guys doing for us? Freeze the rent.

15 (Applause.)

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

18 Winsome Pendergrass, followed by
19 Ramona Kearns and Cheryl Cloud.

20 Please, Ms. Pendergrass.

21 MS. PENDERGRASS: Good evening. I
22 am a member of New York Communities for Change, but
23 tonight I am speaking on behalf of the tenants who
24 cannot be here tonight because of broken elevators
25 going on three months, tenants who are disabled,

1

2 and tenants who are doing the third shift, three
3 jobs. They cannot take another rent hike increase.

4

There are only two people sitting
5 up there who understand what tenants are going
6 through and understand the pain that we are
7 feeling.

8

The lady on the left is not paying
9 attention. She's so bored. I don't know why she
10 doesn't step down from the Board -- from these old
11 shenanigans, because she's not here to hear what we
12 are saying. And I know it's a done deal for you
13 all because you already make up your mind that
14 you're going to squeeze some more blood out of us.

15

Just five days ago, you all gave
16 \$2.5 million to a candidate to be a mayor. Yet you
17 claim you are all broke. Our lives are being
18 reduced daily by the inhumane way you treat us
19 every year.

20

We have the power in our vote
21 people. And we are going to use it. We'll use it
22 to fight against this injustice.

23

Last December, we were
24 demonstrating outside where you all keep your
25 fundraiser, your gala, and you were dressed to the

1

2 nines in pearls and diamonds and gold and Versace,
3 and all of them big names. Yet you claim you are
4 broke, so you have to raise our rent again.

5

 When I look at these young
6 baby-faced men sitting up there, sucking up all
7 that money in real estate, while we are living in
8 mold-infested apartments, roaches and rats and
9 everything. That is so inhumane. But yet you
10 claim you are broke and you have to raise our rent.
11 You are friendly with the mayor, so you'll buy your
12 way in to sit in that seat.

13

 I heard a lady up there just
14 remind you that there is a God. You might not
15 believe in God, because if you all are believing
16 God, you wouldn't be doing what you're doing. I am
17 here to say to you, you are all vampires.

18

(Audience participation.)

19

 MS. PENDERGRASS: Greedy, greedy
20 vampires. And you're all asking for more of our
21 blood. But we are asking for a rent freeze, rent
22 freeze --

23

(Audience participation.)

24

MS. PENDERGRASS: And as I said --

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

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MS. PENDERGRASS: -- we have the
power of the vote. We go fuck you all up.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.
Ramona Kearns, Cheryl Cloud, and
William Brisheski (phonetic).

MS. KEARNS: Good evening,
everyone.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ramona Kearns,
please.

MS. KEARNS: Good evening.

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please, ma'am?

MS. KEARNS: Thank you for giving
me this opportunity to speak. I live in the East
New York City line area of Brooklyn, okay?

(Audience participation.)

MS. KEARNS: I don't have the
complaints that the majority of all of those who
have complained. I love where I live. I'm
grateful. But my issue is I'm a senior citizen. I
had to come out of retirement in order to pay my
rent, okay?

I should be enjoying myself, but I
can't because I have to work to keep a roof over my

1

2 head. And I'm recently widowed, okay? So, I'm
3 struggling.

4 And I know you guys, you all are
5 the messengers. We know it's already written in
6 stone. However, just think. Like so many others
7 have said, things can happen overnight, it can
8 change in a heartbeat. You don't meet your
9 mortgage, you know what happens, okay? You don't
10 pay your property taxes, you know what happens.
11 You don't pay your water, your insurance property,
12 you know what happens. So, think about the
13 tenants.

14 We all have to crawl before we
15 walk, you know. We breathe, we eat, we poop, we
16 die. Okay? Let's get it together for everybody
17 here in the city because it's a shame when a senior
18 citizen has to go back into the workforce by force
19 and not by choice. Thank you. Have a good night.

20 (Applause.)

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

23 Cheryl? Cheryl Cloud.

24 MS. CLOUD: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN APPLE: William

1

2 Brisheski, and --

3 MS. CLOUD: Yes, good evening.

4 CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- and Gordon

5 Lee.

6 I'm sorry, ma'am. Please,

7 proceed.

8 MS. CLOUD: Good evening. I would
9 like to say that every year we come to you and you
10 totally ignore us, huh? This is decade in and
11 decade out. When is -- when is -- when is this
12 going to change, huh? When is this going to
13 change? You know, who's going to change it? We
14 the people. Because we can end you. Because we
15 have the multitudes and the power to do it.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. CLOUD: You hear me? And not
18 only that, listen, you are not just changing or
19 preventing us from having a future. What about
20 your children, your grandchildren, your
21 great-great-grandchildren, huh? What about that?
22 We want some justice, okay? We want you to dig
23 down deep and find your humanity because you have
24 none. Okay? Find it and have the guts to stand up
25 to these politicians and that mayor of yours that

1

2 doesn't give a damn about the people, huh?

3

(Applause.)

4

MS. CLOUD: We want a rent

5

rollback and a rent freeze.

6

MALE VOICE: Yes.

7

MS. CLOUD: And we're not playing.

8

What do we want?

9

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

10

MS. CLOUD: When do we want it?

11

AUDIENCE: Now.

12

MS. CLOUD: What do we want it?

13

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

14

MS. CLOUD: And when do we want?

15

AUDIENCE: Now.

16

MS. CLOUD: I rest my case.

17

(Applause.)

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

19

Thank you.

20

William Brisheski, Gordon Lee, and

21

Mildred Walters.

22

MR. BRISHESKI: Good evening,

23

everyone. All of this testifying is falling on

24

deaf ears. Nobody is listening.

25

I personally came up with numerous

1

2 solutions that, if the Board implements, can help
3 all of us. I would like to have a meeting with
4 this Board tonight at the end of the night to bring
5 forward my ideas to create some solutions for us.
6 Thank you.

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

8

Gordon Lee. Mr. Lee, Mildred

9

Walters, and Thomas Golgan.

10

Mr. Lee.

11

MR. LEE: Goodnight, people. As

12

you know, my name is Gordon Lee from right here in

13

Brooklyn. But you can also call me "god". I, with

14

all groups -- all activist groups across the

15

country, because I want to fight with causes nobody

16

can live without. And I was one of the newborns

17

under the Nixon presidency, June 23rd of 1973.

18

I am also here to strictly demand

19

rent freeze. And I'll be -- and I'll be honest

20

with you, the way I feel, people like you all and

21

the mayor deserve to be victims of misconduct. And

22

everybody in here knows why. Everybody in here has

23

been talking about it all night. Because you want

24

to raise rent and the cost of living forever

25

expected, we're still going to be able to afford

1

2 it.

3

4 Now, first to begin with, what
5 I've been trying to understand is how the sex are
6 we going to afford the cost of living if it's going
7 to go up forever. Our incomes is not going up as
8 fast. Some of our incomes is not going up at all.
9 Some of our incomes is literally going down in so
10 many ways.

11

12 I remember in 2020, when it was
13 the pandemic. It was a social distance -- social
14 distancing, stay-at-home order. We had to stay
15 home. We couldn't even go to work to make money to
16 pay our rent because you all in authority,
17 including Andrew Cuomo, didn't want to cancel the
18 fuck rape rent. You didn't want us to go -- we
19 couldn't -- we weren't allowed to go to work to
20 make money to pay the fuck rape rent. But then we
21 still have to pay the rent, but how are we going to
22 pay the rent if we're not allowed to go to work?

23

(Applause.)

24

25 MR. LEE: I mean, you all want --
26 and if it's a pandemic, do you want us to obey the
27 stay-at-home, social distancing order or not? Do
28 you want us to go to work to make money to pay the

1

2 rent or not?

3

4 I'm not even going to say I'm -- I
5 remember -- and I'm not even going to say that I'm
6 not going to vote for Cuomo. I am most definitely
7 not going to vote for Cuomo. Like, he doesn't even
8 have anything to do with it. If it was Michael
9 Jackson, I would've been saying the same thing; I
10 still wouldn't vote for him. Because like, don't
11 even got nothing to do with it.

11

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

12

MR. BRISHESKI: So that's what I
13 mean, that you all want to raise the cost of living
14 forever, but some of our incomes is literally going
15 down. How are we going to afford a rising cost of
16 living with a shrinking income? You know, one of
17 the things I don't have the patience with you
18 bitches, you want to make demands on us we can't
19 meet. It seems you think that we are miracle
20 workers. You think we're going to --

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

22

Thank you.

23

MR. BRISHESKI: -- we're going to
24 imagine and pull \$1,000 out of our pocket. I
25 can't. Even if I could, I would not. Because of

1

2 your attitude, I feel like I shouldn't. And I
3 understand that --

4 CHAIRMAN APPLE: We have many
5 other speakers, sir.

6 MR. BRISHESKI: -- you know, we're
7 begging for --

8 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please, finish.

9 MR. BRISHESKI: -- for
10 affordability. I understand you all think that
11 affordable and free are the same thing. We're
12 asking for affordable rent, rent freeze, and
13 affordable --

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.
15 Thank you very much.

16 (Applause.)

17 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Mildred Walters,
18 Thomas Golgan, Yola Duke.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Mildred went home.

20 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Mildred went
21 home?

22 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay. Thank you.
24 Thomas Golgan.

25 THE INTERPRETER: I think he spoke

1

2 already.

3

4 CHAIRMAN APPLE: He did? Oh,
5 okay. I'm sorry. It's getting very late.

6

7 Yola Duke.

8

9 MS. DUKE: Yes.

10

11 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ms. Duke, please
12 come on down. Shawnee Costley (phonetic) would be
13 next. And Cynthia Gowen after that.

14

15 So, Ms. Duke, please.

16

17 MS. DUKE: Good afternoon,
18 everyone. This is my first time in a meeting like
19 this. Never thought I would have to come to
20 something like this --

21

22 (Applause.)

23

24 MS. DUKE: -- but I always say, I
25 live in East Flatbush on Lenox Road. And the
26 landlord he own like about 10 different buildings
27 that they have put up on that street. And the rent
28 is going up and up and up. I have one income that
29 I'm living with. Right now, they're going to turn
30 off my gas and my lights because I don't have no
31 money to pay for it.

32

33 MALE VOICE: Shame.

34

35 MS. DUKE: I mean, come on. Why

1

2 raise the rent? I'm a senior citizen, 67 years
3 old. I don't need to go back out there and work.
4 I done do 44 years already. I don't need no more.
5 You guys had to take this into consideration.
6 Don't raise the rent. That's the bottom line.

7

MALE VOICE: It's simple.

8

MS. DUKE: All of you guys sitting
9 up there, I see you guys writing (unintelligible)
10 what the front on the writing is. But I hope you
11 all writing to freeze the damn rent.

12

(Applause).

13

MALE VOICE: Freeze the damn rent.

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

15

Thank you.

16

Shawnee Costley, Cynthia Gowen,

17

and Vinceer Bea (phonetic).

18

Shawnee, please.

19

MS. COSTLEY: Yeah, my name is

20

Shawnee Costley. I'm 35 years old. I've been a

21

tenant my whole life. I've had a number of

22

experiences in my home that range from

23

uncomfortable to disgusting. And I doubt you have

24

similar experiences. You could correct me if I'm

25

wrong. How about that? I'll tell you some of the

1

2 things that I've experienced in my life and if
3 you've had a similar experience in your home, you
4 could just -- you could raise your hand. Do we
5 agree, is that all right? Okay.

6

MALE VOICE: You've done bullshit.

7

MS. COSTLEY: When I was 10, the
8 ceiling of my bathroom caved in on me in the -- in
9 the bath. Anybody?

10

(No response.)

11

MS. COSTLEY: When I was 13, the
12 water --- well, the -- the radiator started spewing
13 hot water so hot and so profusely and was never
14 repaired, so that the walls started sweating and
15 peeling and -- did you know that walls could melt?
16 Well, I -- they can, they can basically melt. Has
17 that any ever happened to either of you? That one
18 was kind of unique. I must admit.

19

(Unintelligible background
20 cross-talk).

21

MALE VOICE: I have -- I have had
22 a steam riser in a stabilized building. I know it
23 -- it causes the bubbles to come out. The latex
24 paint bubbles out, I agree. I've seen it.

25

(Audience participation.)

1

2

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25

MS. COSTLEY: Everyone is
marveling because we haven't had this kind of
interaction before.

FEMALE VOICE: You are a liar.
(Unintelligible) is a liar.

MS. COSTLEY: I've also had a
termite infestation in my bedroom, where I saw the
larvae of termites eating at the floor and crawling
through holes. None of these were ever addressed
by any of the city agencies that continue -- did
you turn off my -- that continually make new
departments to address the same problem that they
were already -- that they were already supposed to
address before they made the new apartment? I
don't need this, you all can hear me?

Can you all hear me?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

MS. COSTLEY: Beautiful. So, what
I'm saying is that all of these egregious things
happened to me, they happen to a lot of you, I'm
sure. But they're not happening to the majority of
the people here. (Unintelligible).

(Audience participation.)

MS. COSTLEY: (unintelligible.)

1

2 these motherfuckers constantly write articles about
3 why they are --

4

AUDIENCE: Shame.

5

MS. COSTLEY: (Unintelligible).

6

7 So, us we have created this process for
8 accountability so that we could better our
9 situation.

9

10 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank
11 you, ma'am.

11

MS. COSTLEY: And it doesn't work.

12

13 It doesn't work as it was supposedly designed,
14 right? So, what do we need to do? Fuck this
15 Board.

15

(Applause.)

16

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

17

Thank you.

18

MS. COSTLEY: Fuck this process.

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We still have

20

many other speakers to --

21

MS. COSTLEY: Because -- shut up.

22

23 Because I've done this a number of times. There
24 was an elderly lady who's been doing this since the
25 beginning, right? And what changes? We briefly
had the rent freeze in 2020. And then right back,

1

2 right back, as soon as that rent freeze ended, it
3 was just for the one year and the first year of the
4 two-year leases, right? And then after that, it
5 went right back to skyrocketing increases when
6 people were still out of work from the pandemic.

7 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. COSTLEY: Stop saying thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRMAN APPLE: No.

12 MS. COSTLEY: You, no. You, no.
13 I can say no.

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Could you --
15 could you allow the staff to move to the next
16 person?

17 MALE VOICE: No.

18 MS. COSTLEY: We demand a rent
19 freeze because that is the only reasonable thing
20 for this city of renters to demand. This is an
21 unreasonable process, but these are not
22 unreasonable demands. You're unreasonable.

23 (Applause.)

24 CHAIRMAN APPLE: I think Cynthia
25 Gowen.

1

2

MS. COSTLEY: (unintelligible.)

3

Cynthia, I'll keep talking until Cynthia gets to

4

her mic. How about that?

5

MS. GOWEN: I'm right here.

6

MS. COSTLEY: Oh, here she is.

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I think over

8

there.

9

MS. GOWEN: Oh, I see.

10

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I think over

11

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

12

MS. GOWEN: Thank you.

13

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ms. Gowan,

14

please.

15

MS. GOWEN: Wow, I see that you

16

guys are counting. I don't know how long I'm --

17

excuse me, a little nervous. This is my first

18

time. The last time I was here, I was actually

19

working and I was here for something else. So,

20

this is my first experience. It's not just a

21

request. We are demanding a rent freeze. It's

22

imperative. It's important not only to our elders.

23

It's important to people like me, like you, like

24

them. It's important for my children.

25

(Applause.)

1

2

3

MALE VOICE: We got this. We got this. We got this, yes. Keep going.

4

5

6

7

8

MS. GOWEN: That's okay. You can smile. I'm not offended. I'm not offended, not one bit. All I know I did not expect to feel like this in front of all these people right now. It's not easy --

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

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21

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23

24

25

MALE VOICE: Freeze the rent.

MS. GOWEN: -- we're all trying -- we don't all look like our struggle. COVID happened and everything changed. Some of us gone through multiple procedures within their homes. The rent freeze allows us to breathe and to catch up a little bit.

Every time you feel it's like a dog paddling in the water, every time you catch a breath, you start sinking again. There's nothing wrong with working hard. There's nothing wrong with having multiple jobs if you choose to. Why should we -- why should people be 75 years old? You should only work if you want to continue to work, and that's what keeps you pumping and thriving.

(Applause.)

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25

MS. GOWEN: But once you reach a certain age and a certain time in your life and you want to say, all right, I tap out, that should be allowed.

We're not perfect. We're all trying to live, not just survive, live to thrive. We all need that opportunity. And with this rent freeze, it helps people to move forward. It's not just the disabled, it's not just the working class, it's not just the wealthy, it's for everyone.

When was the last time somebody was able to purchase a property? I know people that have properties. Kudos to them. Wonderful. Everyone always asks, "Cynthia, why haven't you left New York City?" I love the concrete jungle.

FEMALE VOICE: Yes, me too.

MS. GOWEN: This is what -- this is it for me. This is it. I enjoy going to other states. I enjoy visiting other counties. I enjoy frolicking on the beach and doing other things. But when you can't think and process that and you're stuck here and things are -- you're worried about if you're going to pay your ConEd, you're going to pay National Grid. You're going to pay --

1

2 you're going to pay all these different things --
3 what do they call that? Peter Piper poem -
4 something?

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

6

Thank you.

7

MS. GOWEN: It's -- message,

8

freeze the rent. Please, and thank you.

9

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

10

Vinceer Bea?

11

FEMALE VOICE: She went home.

12

CHAIRMAN APPLE: She went home?

13

Okay. Thank you.

14

Lex Roundtree (phonetic)? Lex

15

Rowntree? A.M. Goodridge? Dr. Burchell M. Marcus.

16

Dr. Marcus?

17

MR. MARCUS: I'm right here.

18

CHAIRMAN APPLE: You're right

19

there. Please.

20

MR. GOODRIDGE: I got --

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please. Oh, I'm

22

sorry, sir.

23

MR. GOODRIDGE: M. Goodridge.

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: What was your

25

name?

1

2

MR. GOODRIDGE: A. M. Goodridge.

3

A. M. Goodridge.

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I'm sorry,

5

please, sir.

6

MR. GOODRIDGE: May I speak?

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: One second, sir.

8

We'll get to you. Go on, please.

9

MR. GOODRIDGE: Great. To my

10

(unintelligible) Board members. So, I'm with the

11

party for Socialist Liberation, also the Democratic

12

Socialists of America. So, my method is, this is

13

did not about -- about cost of living. It's like

14

Doug pointing over again. So yes, the rent is too

15

damn high, the cost of living to like food,

16

electricity, gas, and water, and all of all that.

17

And our wages do get too fucking

18

low. So that is like the worst-case scenario. So,

19

yes. So, I'm going to be clear with that. So,

20

they have a lot of real estate corruption, like all

21

the target points all over, like that. All they do

22

is dump it (unintelligible.) like fucking

23

condominium and fucking casino with the complete

24

bullshit.

25

FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

1
2 MR. GOODRIDGE: Yes. Like
3 (unintelligible) working in fucking New York City
4 just like everybody else. Or working for the
5 federal government. Got fucking lay the fuck up.
6 (Unintelligible) Elon Musk and Donald Trump, AKA
7 the government -- the Department of Government
8 Efficiency, also known as DOGE, like Medicare,
9 healthcare, childcare, education, cost of living,
10 healthcare for like 911 survivors, and other things
11 (unintelligible) especially the handicapped and
12 disabled. And they also be at risk of being like
13 -- of being privatized or getting coughed just
14 because of -- just because they all think to
15 survive.

16 But this is all because of
17 bullshit. There are two signs like
18 (unintelligible). So don't wait for Cuomo
19 (unintelligible) then freeze the goddam rent.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. GOODRIDGE: And they don't,
22 you could be -- thing go get overly nasty. So same
23 on Elon Musk is a trouble (unintelligible) for all
24 this mess. This is the complete bullshit that all
25 department of government efficiency for their

1

2 Federal State, that been working so hard. But the
3 Federal Government got laid off just because of
4 Elon Musk. And all of a sudden, the cost of living
5 is getting worse and worse. (Unintelligible)
6 getting worse as well. So please -- so do the
7 right thing. Stop playing damn pony games and
8 freeze the goddam rent and buy the taxi sale.

9 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank
10 you very much, sir.

11 Dr. Marcus, followed by Raneta
12 Bradley (phonetic) --

13 MR. MARCUS: Yes, sir.

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- and Liz Jay.

15 FEMALE VOICE: Freeze the rent.

16 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Dr. Marcus,
17 please.

18 MR. MARCUS: Greetings. Greetings
19 to the -- to the panel once again. My name is Dr.
20 Burchell M. Marcus. I'm the community director and
21 advocate for Brooklyn. I know you all have seen my
22 face before and heard my voice before. I've been
23 pleading for years, for years, to panels after
24 panels to freeze the rent.

25 I understand that -- I understand

1

2 that you guys have been mandated by your superiors
3 to do what they say to do. I've been in politics
4 for too long, for a lot of years. I've been
5 campaigning for elected officials, putting them in
6 office and whatnot. But guess what? They turn
7 their backs on the people.

8

They tell the people what they
9 want to hear but when they get in there, right?
10 They do totally different. I go up to Albany,
11 Washington, to advocate for these people of
12 Brooklyn. Because of what I do, I'm called to
13 other parts of the city to advocate for the people.
14 I know what's going on. I do have full knowledge
15 of what is happening. This is tyranny against the
16 people.

17

Do you understand what's -- what's
18 poverty? There is a poverty law that everyone have
19 walked away from. If a community is below the
20 poverty rate, you're not supposed to pay more than
21 -- I think it's 25 percent of your rent.

22

Do you understand what the poverty
23 level is in this city? Especially in our
24 community? Especially Brooklyn? Right now, the
25 reason why the boards have been raising the rent is

1

2 because it's controlled by the Jewish organization
3 that's managing all of these buildings.

4

5 90 percent of the buildings are
6 being managed by the Jewish communities. There are
7 Jewish managers that's managing these buildings and
8 they keep forcing these panels, these elected
9 officials who have taken the checks on the table to
10 appease them.

11

12 I've seen it with my own eyes.
13 I've told one of my elected officials that I put in
14 office campaign. I put her in office, Alicka
15 Samuel, because she wouldn't take the money; they
16 spent over a million dollars in District 41 to put
17 someone else in that was going to do their bidding.
18 Okay?

19

20 And she lost that race. But guess
21 what? I need every one of you to wake up because
22 your time is very short. I know how to organize.
23 I know how to bring people together. Even the
24 community boards, they're paying off, the Jewish
25 UJA United Jewish Federation are paying off the
community boards so that they do what they call the
district change -- to change the district.

26

MALE VOICE: Rezoning.

1

2

3

MR. MARCUS: The rezoning in our district --

4

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

6

MR. MARCUS: One second. The rezoning in our district. As a community director for Brooklyn, right, I would say for the whole city because the Brooklyn advocate don't come out to these meetings like -- or forums like he used to. He's advocating for the city.

12

13

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Other speakers are waiting, sir. Could you please --

14

15

16

17

18

DR. MARCUS: Yes. He's -- I could -- I could use an extra minute. I've seen -- I've seen people use -- I've seen people use that extra two minutes. I could use one extra minute to say this.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

We need accountability. And so far over the years, the Board have not given these people accountability. You come up here and you sit down and some of you may agree with the people, but then when you get back there, you're afraid to lose your jobs because if you don't do what the mayor said to do, guess what, you're out. I've

1

2 seen it happen. I've been to --

3 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

4 Ms. Bradley has been waiting very
5 patiently, sir.

6 MR. MARCUS: -- I've been to --

7 I've been to Ashville Place. I've been to

8 Asheville Place. I've been to -- I've been to --

9 listen, I've been to Metgevas (phonetic), I've been
10 to all over, yes.

11 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Yes, let's --

12 please.

13 DR. MARCUS: I've been to -- I've

14 been all over advocating for these people every day

15 for the education and everything. People know me.

16 You all have seen me on TV advocating for the

17 people. I speak for the people. So --

18 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

19 MR. MARCUS: -- if you guys are

20 not going to speak for the people, you need to quit

21 your jobs. Period. Freeze the damn rent.

22 (Applause.)

23 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

24 MR. MARCUS: You don't need no

25 more rent increase.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ms. Bradley.

4

MS. BRADLEY: I'm right here.

5

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Followed by Liz

6

Jay and John August Bridgeford.

7

Please, ma'am.

8

MS. BRADLEY: I can't believe that

9

you was worried about my patients, but you're not

10

worried about my housing. I can't believe that you

11

was worried about me standing here while that man

12

spoke his truth, but you're not worried about that

13

I can't pay my rent. Because you raised it last --

14

you raised it the year before, you raised it last

15

year.

16

Ms. Christina, she can't even look

17

in my face. Because every year I make sure she see

18

me. Because I see her. I know who she is, and I

19

have seen her put -- fight for landlords to put

20

tenants out. So, I don't even want to talk to her.

21

I come to talk to you all. I come to tell you all

22

vote like a teddy. All right. Vote for a rent

23

freeze. You're all damn wrong.

24

Let me tell you all a story. My

25

aunt is 78 years old. They -- the scammers scammed

1

2 her bank account. Last night, she couldn't sleep
3 because she couldn't pay her damn rent. She
4 worried about the landlord putting her out for one
5 month's rent.

6

Up all night. 78 years old.

7

That's a shame. The most vulnerable people, the
8 children and the elderly, if you all don't do it
9 for us, at least do it for them. Come on. I
10 didn't even know this man had a voice; I heard a
11 voice. I never heard none of them speak but him.

12

FEMALE VOICE: Shame on you.

13

MS. BRADLEY: And he always wants
14 to rush us off the mic because we can't speak our
15 truth. I live on a fixed income. My rent is
16 exactly \$2,285. My fixed income is exactly \$1,125.
17 So, if I didn't have a subsidy, I wouldn't have a
18 home. Because you all raised the rent.

19

All we asking is for a simple rent
20 freeze, all we just asking is to dig down deep
21 inside and have compassion. Because we all serve
22 the same God, I hope. And God don't sleep --

23

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

24

MS. BRADLEY: -- and He sees each
25 and every one of you all. I don't even know how

1

2 you all sleep at night. I don't. Every year we
3 come here, but I'm done. All I got to say --

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

5

MS. BRADLEY: -- is don't vote for

6

Cuomo --

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Liz, is there a

8

Liz Jay here?

9

MS. BRADLEY: -- vote for a rent

10

freeze.

11

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

12

And then John August Bridgeford

13

and Brit Sellers (phonetic).

14

Please.

15

MS. JAY: Yes. Hi, my name's Liz.

16

I came here tonight as a New York tenant of 13

17

years and a volunteer with a We Fight Back program.

18

And I came to demand a rent freeze. And I came

19

with some numbers, but I don't think I need to say

20

all that because when it comes down to it, this is

21

really about human dignity. And we've seen, we've

22

-- it's been heartbreaking to hear so many stories

23

from tenants who are struggling already. And then

24

they have to come to this meeting and they have to

25

appeal to a Board to just ask for basic dignity.

1

2 And it's dehumanizing, you know.

3

4 So why are we here? Why is it
5 that our rents continue to rise while one in five
6 New Yorkers cannot afford to meet their basic
7 needs? Why is that?

8

9 Why are our buildings overrun with
10 rats and cockroaches and falling apart from
11 neglected repairs? And why do thousands of New
12 Yorkers sleep in shelters every night and on the
13 streets while 100,000 rent-stabilized units sit
14 vacant? And they're perfectly good units that are
15 kept off the market on purpose so they can drive up
16 the rent prices.

17

AUDIENCE: Shame.

18

19 MS. JAY: These corporate
20 landlords and the capitalists are squeezing the
21 working-class people and low-income New Yorkers.
22 Why? Just so they can -- they can make some more
23 money while they do nothing? Yes, that's not all
24 though. Let's call this what it is. This is an
25 attack on the working class. This is a strategy to
keep us in survival mode. Because how are you
supposed to think about how you're going to help
your neighbor when you're just struggling to make

1

2 ends meet for you and your family?

3

4 They want to keep us in survival
5 mode so that we won't come together so that we
6 won't fight back, because they know that there are
7 more of us than there are of them.

7

(Applause.)

8

9 MS. JAY: And they know that when
10 we fight, we win. So, we're going to fight and
11 we're going to show up to all these meetings
12 because this is our right.

12

13 Housing is a human right. Fight.
14 Fight. Fight. Housing is a human right. Fight.
15 Fight. Fight. Housing is a human right.

15

(Audience participation.)

16

17 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank
18 you, ma'am.

18

19 John August Bridgeford, followed
20 by Brit Sellers and Cherise Richards.

20

Sir, Mr. Bridgeford?

21

22 MR. BRIDGEFORD: Hi. My name is
23 John August, and I'm a tenant. And I want to start
24 off tonight by congratulating all of you on the
25 appointment of a lifetime by our corrupt mayor.
That must be really -- something you're really

1

2 proud about.

3

And it is a lifetime appointment

4

because for the rest of your lives, every time you

5

walk down the street and you see someone without a

6

home, you can know that you did that. Every time

7

you walk in a neighborhood and you see a

8

monstrosity of an empty luxury building that has

9

displaced countless families, you can know that you

10

did that.

11

FEMALE VOICE: You did that.

12

MR. BRIDGEFORD: And every time

13

you drive through the outer boroughs on your way to

14

a vacation house and you happen to drive by a

15

shelter and you see a family, you can know that you

16

displaced them.

17

AUDIENCE: Shame.

18

MR. BRIDGEFORD: I want to remind

19

everybody here tonight that we live on Turtle

20

Island and we are on Lenape Land, and rent is not

21

native to this land.

22

Rent is an invention that was

23

brought by the colonizers, and rent is theft. I'm

24

not interested in a rent freeze. I'm not even

25

interested in a rent rollback. I'm here tonight to

1

2 say that we need to cancel rent.

3

(Audience participation.)

4

MR. BRIDGEFORD: We need to cancel the rent. And so, we're going to go home tonight after making our voices heard, and we're going to know that it didn't really matter, right? Because these colonizers don't care about us, and they damn sure do not care about canceling the rent.

10

But we have a choice to make every single month. We have a choice to make. To pay the rent or to not pay the rent. And I have had the privilege to organize with so many Brave Hope members that have worked together with their neighbors and decided that they are not going to pay the rent.

17

(Applause.)

18

MR. BRIDGEFORD: And so, we have that power, and it's really scary right now.

20

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, sir.

21

MR. BRIDGEFORD: It's really scary right now.

23

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Brit Sellers.

24

MS. SELLERS: I'm good.

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: You're ready to

1

2 go?

3

MR. BRIDGEFORD: But we have a
choice, right? We don't need to look up to this
Board on their throne, on their pedestal. We need
to look around at us. We need to look around at
us, and we need to look around --

8

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please finish up,
sir.

10

MR. BRIDGEFORD: -- our neighbors
at our building --

12

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please finish up.

13

MR. BRIDGEFORD: -- and we can
decide to start a rent strike. We can decide to
cancel the rent because no one deserves to be
taking our money. No one deserves to be collecting
our money. Rent is theft. This is a fucking joke.

18

(Applause.)

19

CHAIRMAN APPLE: All right. Ms.
Sellers. Cherise Richards, Monisa Walker. I'm
going to call the names out. Nicole Fiero
Fernandez (phonetic), Amy Belton, Rhakeema Worley
(phonetic). If your name was called, you can come
on down and you'll be able to speak.

25

Please, ma'am.

1

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MS. SELLERS: This is my third year here. Second time speaking. I'm a Bushwick and Brooklyn resident that has lived in the same rent-stabilized apartment for 14 years.

And I'm going to get a little personal. I work to provide access to arts, specializing in theater and dance, to almost 2,000 underserved communities of children in our incredible city.

The arts, though continuously losing funding, are crucial to New York, especially to tourism and all that. I work hard to support New York City children to find their voices, a place to belong, and to fulfill their dreams in all aspects of their lives. My job is pivotal to New York City's future, yet I'm struggling to keep my future here.

My rent is over 65 percent of my current salary. The increase last year put me at my highest risk of eviction after losing my last theater job to funding cuts for the arts.

Okay. I can't move elsewhere in the city, even if the rent was lower in another apartment, because I don't make five times the

1

2 rent, which is a common requirement. The median
3 rent has surpassed \$4,000 in this city, and my
4 neighborhood alone is at 3,500.

5

I unfortunately make too much
6 money for government assistance, but take too
7 little money to continue to live where I've been
8 living for 14 years. With ConEd increasing at
9 least 11 percent and National Grid Gas increasing
10 at least 13 percent this summer, as well as house
11 lease rates continuously increasing.

12

Each year feels like this process
13 is a test to see how much New Yorkers will take
14 before they break. As this Board not only
15 increases rents each year but exponentially
16 increase -- exponentially increasing year after
17 year.

18

People like me, who contribute as
19 much as I have to fostering the youth and the
20 future of this city, can't afford to live here.
21 It's ludicrous. That's why I'm not only asking for
22 a rent freeze, I'm asking for a rent rollback. We
23 can't keep losing people who work hard for this
24 city for its future to high rent prices.

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Cherise Richards.

4

Ms. Richards, please.

5

MS. RICHARDS: Yes. Hello. Hi,

6

I'm Cherise Richards, a member of the Metropolitan

7

Council on Housing. This is my first time here.

8

My first time speaking like this at an event like

9

this. I lived -- I lived in -- I live in a

10

rent-stabilized apartment in East New York by

11

Shepherd and Pickens for the past two and a half

12

years.

13

And, yes, like it took a year --

14

it takes like a year to get appliances fixed, even

15

for my neighbor who pays market rate.

16

I'm a hardworking teacher. I'm a

17

childhood educator. I'm struggling to make ends

18

meet. I'm struggling to pay the 1,840 -- \$1,840 I

19

pay for rent. So, I'm severely rent-burdened.

20

Behind -- I'm behind right now.

21

And yes, so I agree. I just want

22

to echo what everybody else has been saying: yes,

23

the landlords don't need more money. We need a

24

rent freeze. And yes, we'll vote soon for the

25

primary in about two weeks. So -- and we'll keep

1

2 and we'll find other ways to keep fighting back and
3 yes. But I want to thank you in advance for
4 hopefully giving us that rent freeze. Thank you.

5

(Applause.)

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Monisa Walker.

7

Nicole Fiero Fernandez.

8

Monisa?

9

MS. WALKER: It's Monisa. So, I'm

10

Monisa Walker. I lived in Brooklyn for over 30

11

years -- well, Brownsville, for almost 30 years.

12

Sooner or later, I felt like I would be put out of

13

Brownsville. Because instead of rent

14

stabilization, we have gentrification, which is not

15

helping us, it's killing us. Rent is becoming too

16

damn high. What I don't get is why on top of

17

gentrification, the seven of you are still raising

18

the rent.

19

You came to this hearing and I

20

feel like you're just here to stare at us because

21

there has not been no change as of today. What

22

makes -- so as of today -- from since last year, I

23

cursed you out, I still don't see no change at all.

24

One thing is, today makes six

25

weeks I have no gas. No gas because I went to

1

2 court, the landlord took me to court and lost. So,
3 this is retaliation for me winning against him.
4 And you all still stand with -- you all still stand
5 with these same landlords and them same developers
6 that don't care about nobody.

7 Brownsville did not have all them
8 skyscrapers that you all putting up now. That's
9 displacing people that look like me out of my own
10 community.

11 So, I'm on the side of keeping
12 people alive. And you seven are on the side of
13 making sure they die and be displaced. Not you
14 two, because I know I fuck with you all. I don't
15 fuck with you all. This is the same attitude.
16 Remember I was cursing you all out last year, but I
17 felt like I wanted to say how I felt this year
18 about the same shit I've been going through for a
19 whole year since you all increased the rent. Where
20 landlords still feel they have -- they have some
21 priority to keep fucking this over and keep raising
22 up the rent because of you all.

23 And you, I swear to God, it takes
24 me so much, Christina, I want to -- I want you to
25 know it takes me so much to not want to throw my

1

2 phone and hit you in the face, because you have no
3 compassion. You just sit there every year, and you
4 look evil. Every time you don't care. You're
5 laughing -- you laughing. And again, you was the
6 first person --

7

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ma'am.

8

MS. WALKER: -- Alex, you was the
9 first person to open your mouth to answer somebody
10 from this Board.

11

Every year, these people look at
12 us and act like we must be stupid. We must be
13 deaf, dumb, and blind. They don't answer us. They
14 don't say nothing back to us. But those are the
15 people that have the decency to increase our rent.
16 Why? None of you all live in rent-stabilized
17 buildings? None of you all know what people is
18 going through. None of you all. But guess what?
19 Every year you all always choose to raise the
20 fucking rent. So, I'm asking --

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you, ma'am.

22

MS. WALKER: -- everybody -- I
23 don't care, you can keep saying thank you, I'm
24 going to keep talking.

25

Like I'm asking everybody to vote

1

2 for a rent freeze. And damn sure don't vote for no
3 fucking Cuomo. He did shit for us. I don't care
4 about that Western Indian trade. You all feel like
5 he did something? He did shit for us.

6 So, Mayor Adams did shit for us
7 and he is about to do shit for us. Don't leave
8 here today and give this man another fucking chance
9 to fuck us. Because they going to keep fucking us.

10 You all put these men in here to
11 help these people keep fucking us. And I'm not
12 talking about you all two. And I keep saying that
13 every year --

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Nicole Fiero
15 Fernandez, are you here?

16 MS. WALKER: You can keep calling.
17 I'm going to keep talking till she get up here.

18 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Don't you --
19 ma'am.

20 MS. WALKER: I'll definitely get a
21 -- I don't care. Every year -- every year you do
22 the same thing. "Thank you, ma'am --

23 CHAIRMAN APPLE: And we still have
24 other names.

25 MS. WALKER: -- next person." I

1

2 don't give a fuck. Fuck the whole seven of you
3 all. Fuck the whole seven of you all.

4 CHAIRMAN APPLE: I'm going to ask
5 the staff, please.

6 MS. WALKER: See, he hasn't got up
7 yet because he knows. Fuck the seven of you all.
8 He knows -- he knows. He lives in the
9 rent-stabilized property apartment just like them,
10 just like the same people that are supposed to be
11 securing you. Fuck you all.

12 (Applause.)

13 CHAIRMAN APPLE: All right. Ms.
14 Fernandez?

15 (Audience participation.)

16 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please. Amy
17 Bolton, Rhakeema Worley, Kevin Lee Bird, Gianna
18 Ferraren (phonetic), and Eden Ashebir. If you're
19 here please you'll, you'll get a chance to speak.

20 Please, ma'am.

21 MS. FERNANDEZ: Hi. My name is
22 Nicole Fiero Fernandez. I'm a student here at City
23 Tech. I didn't even know this was happening. I
24 was taking a test on the fourth floor. But I'm
25 here now.

1

2

(Applause.)

3

4

5

6

MS. FERNANDEZ: I have never been to a rent board hearing before, but I was very moved by everybody here. I hope you all heard them.

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

I was born in the Lower East Side and I've lived in NYCHA my whole life. So, you may think like this has nothing to do with me. But New York City was the first place in the United States to have public housing. And in -- on Avenue A is where the first houses are built. And they were built in 1935 because apparently, back then we knew housing was essential, but not now.

15

16

17

18

I can't fathom like how much you all are desensitized to all of this. Because you hear it year after year and I don't know, the souls must be empty.

19

20

21

22

23

24

I started studying architecture in 2023 in City College first. And one of the first things we learned is how corrupt the city is and how disproportionate like everything is. So, I'm just letting you all know you all time is coming to an end.

25

You've heard all these stories of

1

2 mold deterioration, no gas, no heat. These aren't
3 just inconveniences; people are dying. So, I want
4 all of you all to know their blood is on your
5 hands. That's not an analogy, that's not a
6 metaphor, that's just the truth. So -- sorry.
7 Well, not sorry to you all.

8 Housing is very special. It
9 doesn't go by the normal rules of supply and
10 demand. More housing and more residents doesn't
11 mean that the prices of everything just goes up and
12 everything is just going through a process. That's
13 not how the complexities of a human life work.

14 There have been many politicians
15 thinking that more buildings will magically make
16 the rent go down, or that rent raises will sort
17 itself out on its own. But we all know that's just
18 not what happens. It's greed. Architects and
19 urban planners all know that the way that our city
20 is going out, it's not possible to be sustainable.

21 I implore you to listen to these
22 people. I don't know if you will, but I hope --

23 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

24 MS. FERNANDEZ: -- you will listen
25 -- you're welcome -- before this city crumbles and

1

2 your jaws will go down with it. You're welcome.

3 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Okay. Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Amy Bolton,

6 followed by Rhakeema Worley, Kevin Lee Bird, Gianna

7 Ferraren, and Eden Ashebir.

8 MS. BOLTON: Hi. My name is --

9 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please, ma'am.

10 MS. BOLTON: My name is Amy

11 Bolton. I'm just going to start off with saying my

12 pronouns are they and them, and please don't call

13 me "ma'am".

14 I have a question for you to start

15 off with. What do you think is causing tenants to

16 struggle with paying their rent? And I would like

17 an answer.

18 FEMALE VOICE: Is she mad at Alex

19 for answering the last time?

20 MS. BOLTON: What do you think the

21 cause of tenants' struggle is?

22 FEMALE VOICE: They're not going

23 to answer. Alex --

24 MS. BOLTON: Because we all know

25 the answer and I think you do too. And it's really

1

2 upsetting that you would just sit there knowing
3 what you can do to make things better and not do
4 anything. I was up here last year and I was crying
5 and I was -- I was trying not to do that this year.

6 FEMALE VOICE: You got this.

7 MS. BOLTON: Last year, I got this
8 job as a tenant organizer and I was thrilled that I
9 was going to be able to do better financially, that
10 I was going to be okay. And somehow, a year later,
11 I'm in more debt because this city will take
12 everything from you. And capitalism doesn't care
13 about humans. And capitalism is everywhere. And
14 I'm paying more than half of my income on rent.
15 And I'm paying hundreds of dollars every month for
16 medical bills for my immunocompromised spouse. And
17 I think every time I'm going to get a break,
18 something else comes and hits me on the head.
19 Okay?

20 So -- and I am fortunate enough to
21 live in a rent-stabilized building that is on the
22 better side. If you come and look at it, you
23 probably think it looks okay, and yet there's
24 somehow still a huge tarp covering the outside of
25 the brick wall because there's leaks and they

1

2 didn't want to do anything to actually fix it, so
3 they just put a tarp over it. And there's exposed
4 outlets in the lobby. But that's a good apartment
5 in this -- in this housing crisis that we have
6 right now. And somehow, we're still expected to
7 continue to pay more and more rent.

8

 It's just -- it honestly baffles
9 me and if the -- if the tables were turned, I think
10 I would have nightmares and I would be vomiting to
11 be making the decisions you guys are making. It
12 would make me literally sick. And I don't know how
13 you do it. And I think that it -- it truly it -- I
14 just don't even have words for it.

15

 I have one thing I want to leave
16 off with saying is that one person cannot do all
17 the good the world needs, but the world needs all
18 the good that you can do. And I firmly believe
19 that's true. And I'm asking you all to do what you
20 can do to make the world a better place.

21

(Applause.)

22

 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank
23 you, ma'am.

24

 Rhakeema Worley. Rhakeema Worley.
25 Ms. Worley, please.

1

2

MS. WORLEY: Hi. My name --

3

CHAIRMAN APPLE: And then we have

4

Kevin -- Kevin Lee Bird, Gianna Ferraren, and Eden

5

Ashebir. Please, ma'am.

6

MS. WORLEY: Hi. My name is

7

Rhakeema Worley. I am a retired city worker. I am

8

also a foster parent. I am now representing -- I

9

am the tenant president of 453 Hinsdale Street and

10

also the other two of 487 and 500 Livonia Avenue in

11

which we have a stream brown water issue. We have

12

been living in these conditions for over five and a

13

half years. Our first year living there, we had

14

brown water issues. These are the buildings that

15

you are increasing our rent for, and they are not

16

treating us the way that we are supposed to be

17

treated.

18

They not only take this increase

19

that you are taking and pay off DHCR, HPD, and

20

everyone else. I'm asking you to actually look in

21

your hearts to actually see that this increase is

22

not helping us. This increase is hurting us even

23

more as a society.

24

We are fighting against in other

25

countries and other worlds. New York is supposed

1

2 to be a better place. A place for humanity and for
3 justice. As we see right now, we're not getting
4 any justice. We're showing standards, but in our
5 own home, we don't have justice. We are protecting
6 those that comes from foreign countries, but we do
7 not protect ourselves. This does not make any
8 sense.

9 And I do understand that there is
10 order and there are things that we are supposed to
11 go through and do as in hardworking, labor, but at
12 the same time, we need justice.

13 We cannot be in a society of keep
14 on working and working and working until we die.
15 The pension now is set forth, as in you are
16 supposed to work, not just 25 years, you are
17 supposed to work 60 to 70, 80 years old. We need
18 at least some gratification in getting this freeze
19 completed and stopped.

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

22 (Applause.)

23 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Kevin Lee Bird.
24 Kevin? Gianna Ferraren and Eden Ashebir.

25 MS. FERRAREN: I'm Gianna.

1

2

CHAIRMAN APPLE: You're Gianna?

3

Please.

4

MS. FERRAREN: Hi. My name is

5

Gianna Ferraren and I'm a Bushwick resident. I'm

6

here with the Bushwick Housing Independence

7

Project.

8

(Applause.)

9

MS. FERRAREN: I'm here to share a

10

statement from a friend and coworker, Theresa

11

Schlepp, and her partner, Cory Gross, who are

12

residents in a rent-stabilized unit in Bushwick at

13

218 Himrod. They could not be here today.

14

"Whenever the Rent Board approves

15

rent increases for stabilized units, that is a

16

guaranteed increase for me and my partner, who have

17

been in the same unit for three years now. That's

18

because our landlord will increase the rent by that

19

percentage, regardless if his costs have actually

20

gone up.

21

This guaranteed increase would

22

make sense if my landlord was actually spending any

23

money on this unit. But he's not. He does not do

24

upkeep on this building. There are virtually zero

25

costs for him to maintain it. A good example is

1
2 last year, when there was a carbon monoxide leak
3 coming from our basement and seeping into the
4 basements of our neighbors, whose carbon monoxide
5 detectors went off. When the fire department came
6 to inspect, they found severely rotting wooden
7 beams and no carbon monoxide detector in our
8 basement. I wouldn't mind these increases if I saw
9 any benefit to them. But the extra money goes
10 right to his pocket."

11 Nothing else. Thank you for your
12 time. Freeze the rent now.

13 (Audience participation.)

14 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

15 Eden. Eden Ashebir? No? You
16 are, sir?

17 MALE VOICE: Yes, Eden Ashebir.
18 Listen.

19 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh, okay. Oh,
20 I'm sorry.

21 MALE VOICE: Yes, yes. No,
22 problem. So, I am an organizer with hope here in
23 Brooklyn. Very proud. You know, very proud to be
24 on this stage. I got a lot of inspirations from my
25 comrades, my colleagues out here. But I think this

1
2 is a very fucked up system. It's a very fucked up
3 Board you have here. You know, supposedly we are
4 in one of the greatest democracies in the world,
5 you know, in the -- in the face of the planet. I
6 had actually seen -- like me traveling throughout
7 this world, it has amazed me when you go to third
8 world countries like South Africa or Brazil or
9 Venezuela, and over there they're building social
10 housing for their own populations.

11 (Applause.)

12 MALE VOICE: People have rent
13 control in their own populations because housing is
14 a human right. But here in the richest city in the
15 world, it's like -- it's like a different language
16 we're speaking to you. You know, even though we're
17 speaking English -- are we speaking English or --

18 (Unintelligible cross-talk.)

19 MALE VOICE: But I don't know if
20 these people understand. It's like -- it's crazy
21 just to think that, like we're here just demanding
22 a basic human right, which is housing, you know,
23 which is, you know, for our livelihood here in this
24 society. But I don't know, these people, I don't
25 know if they understand democracy.

1

2

FEMALE VOICE: (Unintelligible.)

3

MALE VOICE: Well, yes.

4

FEMALE VOICE: (Unintelligible.)

5

MALE VOICE: No, I know it's -- I

6

know it's capitalism, but also with capitalism,

7

too, they're bad business people. Because it's

8

like how you're like supplying demand. You're not

9

supplying to the -- to the masses. So, it is like,

10

they're also horrible capitalists. You know,

11

they're about to crash their own fucking economy

12

here.

13

How the fuck are people supposed

14

to buy shit from corporations, like in their

15

theory, you know, if you don't -- if you can't pay

16

your rent. If they don't got nobody here, you

17

know. So they're going to crash -- like, it's

18

funny somebody said -- the guy, what was it?

19

No, I remember I had some

20

pro-landlord guy the other day tell me about that

21

they were afraid of this crazy person to be -- to

22

be mayor. And I was like, who, Cuomo? And he was

23

talking about Mamdani, you know, he was talking

24

about Zohran. But he was saying, "Oh yes. If this

25

guy wins, then you're going to have people leaving

1

2 the city." I'm like, "People are already leaving
3 the city. People are already getting displaced,"
4 you know, so it's just -- it just amazes me.

5

(Unintelligible background
6 talking.)

7

MALE VOICE: But anyways, you know
8 -- you know, it's all about -- I want to hear this.
9 What's this about? Freezing the rent. Rent
10 freeze. We want to a rent freeze, right?

11

AUDIENCE: Yes.

12

MALE VOICE: When do we want it?

13

AUDIENCE: Now.

14

MALE VOICE: What do we want?

15

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

16

MALE VOICE: When do we want it?

17

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you.

18

AUDIENCE: Now.

19

MALE VOICE: What do we want?

20

AUDIENCE: Rent freeze.

21

MALE VOICE: When do we want it?

22

AUDIENCE: Now.

23

MALE VOICE: Yes. You know, --

24

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Right.

25

MALE VOICE: If we don't get it,

1

2 we shut it down.

3

(Audience participation.)

4

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I think with

5

that, all the -- all the names we have --

6

MALE VOICE: Wait, wait, wait,

7

wait. I'm just going to keep talking.

8

CHAIRMAN APPLE: -- testified.

9

MALE VOICE: I'm going to keep

10 going.

11

CHAIRMAN APPLE: So, we're going

12

to end.

13

MALE VOICE: You know why?

14

Because I'm all -- I'm taking over this. This is

15

going to be the people.

16

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We're going to

17

end right here now.

18

MALE VOICE: This is going to be

19

the people's board.

20

CHAIRMAN APPLE: I'm going to ask

21

-- then we finish.

22

MALE VOICE: This is the people's

23

Board.

24

MS. ASHEBIR: (Unintelligible).

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Oh, I'm sorry.

1

2 MS. ASHEBIR: You saw me --

3 CHAIRMAN APPLE: I thought -- I
4 thought that was Eden.

5 MS. ASHEBIR: (Unintelligible.)

6 CHAIRMAN APPLE: So, he stole your
7 name, ma'am. But please, speak.8 MS. ASHEBIR: (Unintelligible)
9 before mine.10 CHAIRMAN APPLE: Please, speak.
11 Please, ma'am. I didn't -- I apologize. You did
12 sign up, I appreciate that. Thank you.

13 MS. ASHEBIR: Don't thank me.

14 First off to the Board, you all need to remember
15 that it's going to be your faces in the history
16 books. Your future grandchildren, your children,
17 all of us who grew up learning all these lessons
18 throughout the world, those faces that we looked
19 at, those will be yours. What you decide this year
20 and every other year, and even in the past years,
21 those decisions you have made are set for history.
22 And people will not forget that.23 I live in a building that, for a
24 total of 35 years, will not have to pay any
25 property taxes. Why? Because 30 percent of the

1

2 units are considered affordable. If you consider
3 paying 2K for a studio, you can see the entire
4 inside of affordableness.

5

And this is in Bushwick. And not
6 even in the corners filled with businesses. Not
7 even there, we're not talking about that. And yet,
8 we're only five years in and it's known that if it
9 rains, the elevator might get stuck.

10

I personally know of at least
11 three instances in which the fire department has
12 had to come and rescue people from the elevator.
13 Neighbors and ourselves, we've almost slipped and
14 hurt ourselves because guess what? We're on a
15 corner and they're not shoveling the snow but every
16 other building seems to be able to do it.

17

That for the door to close,
18 sometimes the elevator, you actually have to kick
19 it. There's a certain way you have to do that.
20 That if you stand in the lobby for just a minute,
21 in the middle of the day, that at least one roach
22 or maybe two, will be looking you straight in the
23 eyes.

24

And brown water, we've had
25 instances of that coming straight out of every

1

2 single tap. Again, this building is hardly five
3 years old. And they're not paying any property
4 taxes for the next still 30 more years for, again,
5 affordable, "affordable apartments". Only 30
6 percent. Only 30 percent of the building.

7 The doors for packages they don't
8 lock. How many thefts have we had? I can't count.
9 Our main entrance doesn't always lock. And we're
10 not notified. We're not notified when the elevator
11 breaks down either.

12 And the -- and it's not even fully
13 rent-stabilized. And yet we're talking about --
14 we're here under this illusion, and I know even
15 some people in this room or watching or whatever, I
16 think that capitalism is still something that
17 brings innovation.

18 How can you tell me, how can you
19 tell yourself -- I would hope that none of you on
20 this Board isn't able to do basic, basic
21 mathematics. How can you tell me that a building
22 that was just put up and is already falling apart,
23 and the landlords are not doing anything about it?
24 They're not following up, they're not doing
25 anything. How can you sit here and tell me that

1

2 this is the type of innovation that we need or want
3 or deserve in this world for all that we do?

4

5 Anyone still under this illusion
6 is lying to themselves. And we need to start
7 opening our eyes to that, to realizing that
8 capitalism is the real demon in the room.

8

9 I just don't -- see how you can be
10 serious. So, to you Board members, I think if you
11 had any dignity, at all, I mean, frankly, I just --
12 how dare you all say, "Thank you." Say, "Oh please
13 respect other people's time. There's other people
14 coming after."

14

15 You are acting as if we're the
16 ones who are rude and inconsiderate. And yet you
17 have the audacity to increase rent year after year.
18 There is no version of the math, not a single
19 version of the math. Not if you're looking at the
20 full picture that actually makes -- that make
21 sense. Not even food, SNAP, \$292 per month.
22 Average groceries are \$500 a month for one person.
23 How does that make sense? Somebody brought up the
24 eggs are \$9, and people will say, "Oh, well, hey,
25 at least in New York City, we've increased the --
26 the minimum wage to \$16 while the rest of the

1

2 nation is at 7.25."

3

4 How -- so you're saying that one
5 hour of work is worth a -- not even two full
6 cartons of eggs.

6

(Audience participation.)

7

8 MS. ASHEBIR: And yet you want to
9 tell us that paying this is reasonable. What a
10 joke you are to play along with this farce, acting
11 like there's a world in which suggesting any type
12 of rent increase makes sense.

12

13 Certainly, none of you are this --
14 are this thoughtless or this -- able to live with
15 yourselves for this.

15

16 So, when you look at the real,
17 true picture and remember that the basics that
18 every human needs are food, water, and shelter. I
19 told you about food prices for even those who are
20 on SNAP. People don't even -- don't even trust the
21 water in the city because the pipes in our
22 buildings, old or new -- I just told you about how
23 our new building has brown water and all this. How
24 -- we can't trust the water.

24

25 You spend millions and millions
per year clearing out housing camps or encampments

1

2 where people are trying to live. So, you make it
3 illegal to live. We can't get food that's
4 affordable unless you steal it. Well, you'll go to
5 jail for that. You're going to put people in
6 forever debt and put them in jail for not paying.
7 You're not going to let us put up tents anywhere,
8 so we can't live.

9

So, you know what that's called?
10 That's called enslavement.

11

MALE VOICE: Yes.

12

MS. ASHEBIR: You're forcing us to
13 have to work in order to live, or else we will be
14 thrown into jail. You have made it illegal to
15 live.

16

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ma'am, we're
17 going to conclude this hearing now because we're
18 going to run out of time. So --

19

MS. ASHEBIR: -- at minimum a
20 rollback --

21

CHAIRMAN APPLE: We're going to
22 ask -- I'm going to ask you to finish, please.

23

MS. ASHEBIR: -- is the minimum
24 that's deserved.

25

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Ma'am?

1

2

MS. ASHEBIR: A (unintelligible)

3

rent is the real solution and every single one of

4

you, you should be ashamed of yourselves.

5

FEMALE VOICE: Shame. Shame.

6

CHAIRMAN APPLE: All right. Thank

7

you.

8

With that, we're concluding

9

tonight's hearing. I'm going to ask for a motion

10

to adjourn.

11

FEMALE VOICE: (Unintelligible.)

12

CHAIRMAN APPLE: And a second?

13

MALE VOICE: Second.

14

CHAIRMAN APPLE: Thank you. Thank

15

you all for being here tonight. Thank you.

16

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

17

were concluded.)

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1

2 STATE OF NEW YORK)

3 SS.

4 COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

5

6

7

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 43, 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 18th day of November,

15

2025.

16



17

MARC RUSSO

18

19

20

.

21

22

23

24

25

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