

August 28, 2009

The Honorable Jeffrey D. Klein
New York State Senate
State Capitol, Room 427
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Senator Klein

As a member of the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing in New York City, I am writing to ask for your leadership as a key member of the Democratic leadership in repealing vacancy decontrol.

The New York State Assembly has already acted on this historic legislation. Now it is time for the State Senate to pass legislation repealing vacancy decontrol and to deliver this legislation to the governor for his signature this fall. The repeal of vacancy decontrol is crucial to the protection of New York City's dwindling supply of rent-regulated housing that is a lifeline for middle-class, working and poor tenants.

Vacancy decontrol has a devastating impact on New York's affordable housing system. Through vacancy decontrol, New York City has lost at least an estimated 50,000 rent-regulated units since 2005 alone. Right now, at least another 100,000 units are estimated to be on the verge of deregulation. Rent-regulation is New York State's largest affordable-housing system, protecting more tenants than Mitchell-Lama, Section 8 or public housing. Undermining rent-regulation jeopardizes the ability of hard-working New Yorkers to find affordable housing; housing that will not consume so much of their income that they are left with too little to meet the other basic necessities of life. Vacancy decontrol encourages the worst of landlord abuses: tenant harassment, illegal rent increases, faked or cost-inflated apartment improvements. All of these tactics are employed to drive up rents to hit the deregulation threshold in order to displace current tenants in favor of tenants who will pay market-rate rents.

I am looking for you to demonstrate your commitment to the protection of rent-regulation by giving repeal of vacancy decontrol your highest priority this fall.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Signature and Name

Address
