



HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL

April 11, 2019

Dear Governor Cuomo, State Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie:

"Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young-- a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my God."

Psalms 84:3 (NIV)

As leaders of faith communities from across the state, we are called to stand with the most vulnerable among us –New Yorkers who can barely afford to live here anymore. From New York City to Rochester and beyond, millions across our state and in our congregations are on the front lines of a massive housing crisis.

Here is the difficult, painful choice many tenants face: either pay huge portions of their income for increasingly expensive rental housing, or join the growing ranks of the homeless population. This housing crisis is not just an economic crisis or policy crisis- *it's a moral crisis*. That's why we are writing to you today.

We urge you to pass the enclosed legislative package that would renew, strengthen, and expand tenants' rights for all New Yorkers who rent their homes. You should move quickly to enact these bills that will protect and empower all tenants across the state: renters in rent-regulated housing, renters in unregulated housing, and those who live in mobile home communities. The plight of tenants who can barely hang on to their homes deserves your full focus, attention, and leadership.

Do not wait until the end of the legislative session to take action. Get to work now to fix our state's rent laws that, for too long, have favored and enriched landlords over the millions of everyday New Yorkers who are renters.

Now is the time to strengthen the rights of tenants in urban centers, rural areas, and the suburbs throughout New York State.

Now is the time to pass legislation that reflects our state's highest values of justice and fairness - values that our faith communities deeply affirm.

It is morally wrong and unacceptable that New York has the second-highest rate of homelessness in the country, with over 92,000 homeless New Yorkers. That number is on the rise, with 100 New Yorkers being evicted every day. Research shows that the primary cause of homelessness, particularly among families, is lack of affordable rental housing.

As people of faith from across the state, we demand that you enact universal rent control and ensure that all tenants are protected and have access to decent, safe, and affordable housing. This package of bills is the best way to strengthen rent-regulated housing and provide real protections to every New Yorker who rents their home.

With your full support for universal rent control, millions of New Yorkers can live in a more just and moral New York.

Our faith demands: ***"Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. (Isaiah 54:2)"***

Sincerely,

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