



# OUR HOMES, OUR POWER

*HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL'S  
2023 STATE POLICY AGENDA*

**50,000**

Families facing eviction  
in the first half of 2022.

**104,000**

Homeless children  
in New York City.

**55%**

Percent of Black  
households that are  
rent burdened.

## The Problem:

### New Yorkers Are Facing A Historic Housing Crisis

New Yorkers are struggling with a growing housing emergency as inflation raises the cost of a home and displacement spreads across the state. This has led to:

- Record-high rent increases
- Evictions surging back to pre-pandemic levels
- Homelessness at levels unseen since the Great Depression
- Mass displacement in both high cost and low cost areas of New York

5%

2022 NYC Rent Guidelines Board Increases for two-year leases.

3.25%

2022 NYC Rent Guidelines Board Increases for two-year leases.

Rent Increases from 2011 to 2022:

New York City



Syracuse



Albany



Buffalo



New Jersey  
California  
Oregon  
Washington

States with Good Cause Eviction Protections.

Our homes — meant to be our refuge — are just another source of constant, unrelenting anxiety.

The crisis has fallen hardest on people of color. 55% of Black households are rent burdened, compared to 49% of white households and 49% of Asian households.

The lack of access to safe, affordable housing doesn't just hurt individual tenants and homeless New Yorkers. It hurts our neighborhoods and our state as a whole. Skyrocketing rents, slum conditions, and evictions are forcing out longtime residents, unraveling the social fabric that holds our blocks together. Housing insecurity makes our streets less safe, worsens our children's ability to succeed in school, slows down our economy, and endangers our public health.

While Governor Hochul has made a public promise to prioritize housing in the upcoming session, her proposals recycle the same strategies that characterized previous administrations, and have led to the crisis we find ourselves in: expanding our housing supply with programs that pad the profits of private developers and produce unaffordable housing, without addressing the root causes of housing instability.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

New York State has a long history of leading the nation when it comes to affordable housing and tenant protections. It's the birthplace of American social housing models that continue to stably and securely house hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to this day, including union-built co-ops like Co-op City in the Bronx or government-sponsored Mitchell-Lamas like Cobbs Hill Village in Rochester. And in recent years, New York has passed some of the strongest renter protections in the United States.

## *Get involved:*

Visit [hj4a.org/TakeAction](https://hj4a.org/TakeAction) to let your elected officials know that you support the Our Homes, Our Power campaign!



### *THE BILLS:*

*Good Cause  
Eviction Protections*

*Housing Access  
Voucher Program  
(HAVP)*

*Tenant Opportunity  
to Purchase  
Act (TOPA)*

*Emergency Tenant  
Protection Act  
(ETPA) Reforms*

*Social Housing  
Development Authority*

Rather than relying on the whims of landlords, we should embrace our history as a champion for tenants' rights and social housing. Albany must give every New Yorker access to a safe and decent home and freedom from exploitative landlords and unsafe living conditions. True solutions require tackling the imbalance of power between tenants and landlords and uprooting a system that puts profits over people.

In the face of a growing housing crisis, tenants and homeless New Yorkers across the state have come together, and we have the answers.

## **Our Homes, Our Power:**

### **A Tenant and Homeless New Yorker-Driven Agenda for Housing**

In 2023, tenants and homeless New Yorkers are fighting for the “Our Homes, Our Power” platform, five transformational bills that will:

- Ensure all New Yorkers have access to stable housing
- Help New Yorkers prevent eviction and afford the rent
- Give tenants the tools to fight against rent hikes and for safe and decent living conditions
- Correct the balance of power between tenants and landlords
- Provide an alternative to our profit-driven housing market through social housing

## Good Cause Eviction Protections

Good Cause allows tenants to defend themselves in court against evictions and outrageous rent hikes. It prevents arbitrary or retaliatory evictions by requiring landlords to have “good cause” (nuisance, breaking the lease, non-payment of rent) to successfully pursue eviction. Yearly rent increases over a certain threshold—3% or 150% of the consumer price index (CPI, essentially the rate of inflation), whichever is larger—could be challenged by the tenant, requiring the landlord to justify the increase. This bill helps tenants fight for safe conditions without fear of retaliatory evictions.

## Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)

Provides rental subsidies for low-income New Yorkers who are homeless or at risk of losing their housing. With \$250 million in funding the first year, the legislation would create 16,000 vouchers, which would cap tenants’ rent burden at 30%. Housing costs less than shelter and is unquantifiably better for the lives of residents, and the state as a whole.

## Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA)

TOPA gives all tenants the right to collectively make decisions about their homes when their building is up for sale. Tenants could work together to convert their building to resident-controlled social housing, such as shared-equity cooperatives, non-profit rentals, community land trusts, or more, using existing public subsidy programs. By reducing incentives for landlords to keep buildings in disrepair in order to sell them off to the highest buyer, TOPA will also help tenants achieve safer living conditions in their existing housing. With \$200 million in funding for the first year, we can convert 1,600 homes to democratically controlled social housing.

## Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) Reforms

Each year, locally controlled rent guidelines boards (RGBs) adjust rents for rent-stabilized tenants. This bill would bring democracy and transparency to the appointment process for RGB members by empowering local City Councils, not Mayors, to nominate candidates; strengthen accessibility requirements at public hearings; and require the board to take a wider variety of considerations into account when determining rental prices to ensure they truly reflect the reality tenants on the ground face. This bill could also make it easier for upstate municipalities to opt into rent stabilization through reforms of the vacancy study process.

## Social Housing Development Authority

Social Housing is democratically controlled, publicly stewarded, and not run for profit. This bill builds on the legacy of New York’s popular and successful Mitchell-Lama program by creating a Social Housing Development Authority, publicly funded and controlled by the State of New York. This authority would be tasked with tackling the affordability crisis by producing social housing across the entire State. We can create it through acquisition and rehabilitation of our existing housing stock, as well as through new construction.

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