



## THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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### **COUNCIL PASSES BILL TO PUBLICLY SHAME LANDLORDS WHO HARASS TENANTS**

*Landlords Found Guilty of Tenant Harassment Will Now Be Fined up to \$10,000  
Per Apartment and Listed by Name as Offenders on HPD Website*

Today, the New York City Council passed legislation by Council Members Margaret Chin and Jumaane D. Williams that will double the maximum fines for landlords found guilty of tenant harassment, and will force those landlords to be publicly listed as offenders on the website of the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

Tenant harassment takes place when a landlord physically or psychologically threatens or intimidates a tenant or withholds building repairs or others services, in an attempt to force the tenant out of their home. This kind of shameful and illegal behavior by greedy landlords often targets rent-regulated tenants, especially vulnerable senior citizens, and is a major cause of the waves of illegal deregulation that continue to decrease New York City's affordable housing stock.

The legislation passed today, [Intro No. 129-a](#), increases the maximum fine for landlords found guilty of tenant harassment from \$5,000 per residential unit to \$10,000 per residential unit. For repeat offenders — those found guilty of tenant harassment more than once within a five-year period — the legislation also increases the minimum fine from \$1,000 per residential unit to \$2,000 per residential unit.

The legislation also creates an additional punishment, by which landlords found guilty of tenant harassment will be forced to have their name published online. This offenders list — which will also include the address of the building in which the harassment took place — will be placed on HPD's website, and will clearly state that the landlords named in the list have engaged in tenant harassment.

South Brooklyn Legal Services, Legal Services NYC-Bronx and MFY Legal Services, three of the city's top nonprofit legal protectors of low-income New Yorkers facing tenant harassment, joined Council Members Chin and Williams in today's announcement to praise the passage of the bill.

"We're setting a new standard for punishing landlords who harass tenants," **said Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair of the Council's Committee on Aging.** "We're doing it because these types of unethical landlords are ruining lives and killing affordable housing in our communities. Tenant harassment leads to the illegal deregulation of rent-regulated apartments, and it often targets our most vulnerable seniors. Preserving New York City's affordable and senior housing stock means getting tougher than ever on landlords who engage in this behavior, and that's exactly what we've done today. I look forward to seeing our bill signed into law so it can go to work protecting tenants and affordable housing throughout our city."

"While there are plenty of landlords across this city who do the right thing by their tenants, we know there are select, consistent bad actors that make life hard in a city where finding quality, affordable housing is a challenge," **said Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, Deputy Leader, Chair of the Council's Committee on Housing and Buildings.** "I am proud to cosponsor a bill that will combat harassment from landlords and will reduce the financial incentive to harass tenants out of their homes by raising violation fines. This bill is not meant to fine landlords the maximum penalty for every violation, but will give judges the discretion to levy the fine against the most egregious bad actors. Today sends a clear message to all landlords that this city will not allow such illegal behavior, and that the New York City Council will serve and protect all tenants throughout the five boroughs,"

"This is a much-needed legislative response to the worsening epidemic of landlord harassment and tenant displacement," **said Edward Josephson, director of litigation for South Brooklyn Legal Services.** "By requiring public posting of harassment findings, the bill will allow communities to better monitor patterns of unlawful landlord activity and take action to protect critically needed affordable housing."

"The increased fines will immediately benefit tenants by causing landlords to think twice before engaging in such deplorable tactics," **said Ian Davie, deputy housing director for Legal Services NYC-Bronx.** "We look forward to using these new tools to continue to fight for the rights of New York City tenants."

"This legislation is a great step forward in making tenant harassment less profitable for landlords and giving tenants the tools to fight back," **said Jason Blumberg, senior staff attorney for MFY Legal Services.**

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