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# Tenant Inquilino

Housing for people, not profit

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Metropolitan Council on Housing  
339 Lafayette St.  
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PERIODICAL

## City Council Renews Rent Laws Tough Fight in Albany Continues

By Dave Powell

It's official... sort of. The City Council has passed the bills which renew the city's rent laws for three years. For New York City's approximately 60,000 rent-controlled tenants, this means protections have been safely continued. But the state's 2.3 million rent-stabilized tenants, as well as rent-controlled tenants from counties beyond the five boroughs, are still in the trenches—and will likely be there until June 15, when the state's rent laws expire.

On March 12, before a packed house, the Council approved four measures related to rent regulations. Their passage was so fast and uncontroversial that many in the gallery missed it.

Three of them passed by a 45-3 margin, with the only dissenters Republicans Dennis Gallagher of Queens and James Oddo and Andrew Lanza of Staten Island. The first, Intro 367, would renew rent stabilization to the degree the city is permitted to by state law. (The state's Urstadt Law prohibits the city from strengthening its own rent-stabilization laws.) The second, Resolution 690, affirmed that a "housing emergency"—a citywide vacancy rate of below 5%—still exists, a legal step required to renew city rent control. The third, Reso. 691, urges the state legislature to suspend the Urstadt Law—a request that previous Council Speaker Peter Vallone had refused to let see the light of day.

The fourth measure, Reso. 692a, passed 44-4. It calls upon the State Senate and Governor Pataki to enact the Assembly bill passed earlier this year, which would eliminate vacancy decontrol, lower the 1997 law's 20%

vacancy increases, and place Section 8 and Mitchell-Lama buildings vulnerable to market rents under rent stabilization. Peter Vallone Jr. (D-Queens) voted against it, but did not explain why.

Over a dozen Councilmembers did take time to explain their yes votes and urged their colleagues to join them in Albany for the fight that lay ahead. Speaker Gifford Miller specifically said he was committed to lobbying Albany for stronger rent laws and the repeal of the Urstadt Law. East New York Councilmember Charles Barron humorously threatened to join with Vallone Jr. in calling for New York City to secede from the state unless Urstadt was overturned. His comment drew laughs and applause.

The prime sponsor of

these measures was Speaker Miller, a sign that their passage was probably assured upon introduction. In contrast to the

rent-laws package, the Council leadership has yet to take up several other

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**SAVE YOUR HOME**



**ALBANY, MAY 13  
SEE PAGE 5**

## Will Iraq War Create a New Generation of Homeless Veterans?

By Patrick Markee

Wars create homelessness, driving people from their homes wherever combat occurs. However, since the Civil War, there have been no sustained military battles fought on United States territory, so most Americans have no concept of how wars make people homeless.

In contrast, throughout American history there has been a high incidence of homelessness among armed-forces veterans, primarily as a result of combat-related disabilities and trauma and the failure of government benefits to provide adequate housing assistance for low-income and disabled veterans. Without a dramatic change in federal policies, the war on Iraq will create a new generation of homeless veterans. The federal Department

of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that on any given night, some 250,000 veterans are homeless nationwide, and that as many as half a million veterans experience homelessness in the course of a year. That represents around two percent of all living American veterans. Virtually all—97 percent—of homeless veterans are men, and 56 percent are black or Latino. Approximately 45 percent suffer from mental illness, and more than two-thirds suffer from drug or alcohol problems. More than two-thirds of homeless veterans served in the armed forces for at least three years, and 47 percent served in the Vietnam War.

According to a 1996 nationwide survey of homeless people and service providers, one-third of homeless men are veter-

ans, and 23 percent of the total homeless population served in the military. In New York City, nearly one of every 10 municipal shelter beds for homeless single men is set aside for veterans, and each year thousands of homeless veterans utilize municipal and private shelters or reside in public spaces.

### War and Homeless Veterans in American History

Homelessness in the United States dates back to the colonial era, and rising numbers of "vagrants" were noted in urban areas in the wake of the Revolutionary War. New York City Mayor Richard Varick noted in 1784 that "Vagrants multiply on our Hands to an amazing Degree," and overcrowding in jails, workhouses, and almshouses led to the

construction of a new four-story facility in 1796, according to historian Kenneth Kusmer's *Down and Out on the Road: The Homeless in American History*.

The post-Civil War era witnessed a much more significant growth in homelessness nationwide. "Even the words 'tramp' and 'bum,' as applied to the homeless, can be traced to the Civil War era," Kusmer

notes. One reason was the enormous economic dislocation generated by the war and the recession that followed in the early 1870s. Many cities responded by passing laws against "vagrancy." In 1874 there were 98,000 reported vagrants in Boston, more than three times the number just two years earlier. From 1874 to

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## Under Pressure, Council Speaker Retreats on Opposition to Lead Safety

By Kenny Schaeffer

City Council Speaker Gifford Miller announced on April 3 that the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act, Intro. 101, will finally get a committee hearing on June 23—15 months after it was first introduced by Bill Perkins (D-Manhattan) and numerous co-sponsors.

The concession came after a rough period for the Speaker, who has made no secret of his intention to run for mayor in 2005. On March 13, the good-government group Common Cause/NY released a report entitled "Lead Poisoning Legislation and the Political Power of Real Estate in New York City." The report documented how Miller has accepted tens of thousands of dollars in landlord contributions while keeping Intro. 101 bottled up, despite the bill's being sponsored by almost two-thirds of the Council's members. That raised questions about the promises of "new democracy" Miller made when seeking his colleagues' support as speaker last year.

On March 19, a Brooklyn judge struck down the recent modification of the city's term-limits law,

which would have allowed Miller and five other Councilmembers who have served six years in office to run for re-election this November. The lawsuit, argued by former Giuliani aide Randy Mastro on behalf of an undisclosed principal, is now on appeal. If the decision stands, it will deprive Miller of the power of incumbency in what may be a crowded field of Democratic mayoral aspirants in 2005.

On March 26, the New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP) marked the one-year anniversary of Intro. 101's introduction with a mock birthday party at City Hall. The coalition estimates that 5,600 children, mostly from communities of color, have been poisoned in the year in which Miller has blocked the bill. The bill has also been endorsed by the Council's Black, Hispanic, and Asian caucus, the city comptroller and public advocate, the borough presidents of Brooklyn, Bronx and Manhattan, the Working Families Party, and a wide array of children's health advocates and community organizations, including Met Council. These developments re-

ceived significant coverage on NY 1 and in the *New York Times*, as well as a passionate article in the *Sun* by Jack Newfield on April 2.

On April 2, Met Council sent a letter to the Speaker. On April 7, there was good news and bad. Newly elected Councilmember Vincent Gentile of Brooklyn endorsed Intro. 101, giving it a veto-proof majority of 34 sponsors. But after a 90-minute meeting with NYCCELP, including three families with lead-poisoned children, Miller

declined to sponsor the bill or move it from the Council's Housing and Buildings Committee to the Health Committee. The health panel is chaired by Intro. 101 cosponsor Christine Quinn, while the housing committee is headed by pro-landlord Bronx machine product Madeline Provenzano—who, like Miller, voted for Peter Vallone's 1999 bill weakening the city's lead-paint law, derided as the "Lead Poisoning Act of 1999."

### Attention All On-line!

If you have an e-mail address, join the **Met Council "ACTIVE! list."** We'll send you alerts about demonstrations, hearings and other activities. Simply send us a message, subject heading "subscribe", to: [active@metcouncil.net](mailto:active@metcouncil.net)



## Affordable Housing in NYC Let's SAVE what's left!

- Improve Housing Code Enforcement
- Restore City Budget Cuts to Programs that Help Tenants
- Strengthen the Rent Laws

Public Meeting

**Wednesday, April 23rd, 6:30 pm**

**Goddard Riverside Community Center**  
593 Columbus Avenue  
(W. 88th Street)

Contact:

Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development  
Adrian Di Lollo 212-463-9600x2  
Shinichi Murota 212-463-9600x8



### Watch Rent Wars News

the weekly tenants show that covers the news, people, and events that affect New York's tenants.

#### Brooklyn

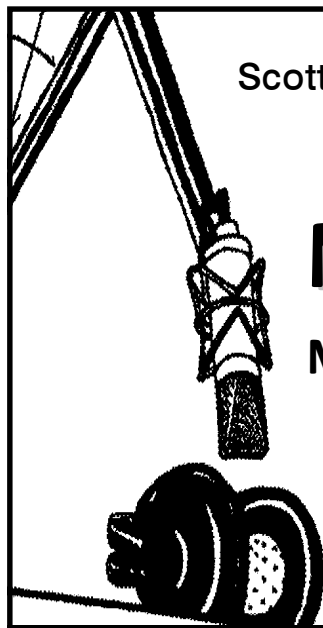
Every Monday at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.: Time Warner Channel 34 or Cablevision Channel 67

#### Manhattan

Every Sunday at 6 p.m.: Time Warner Ch. 67 or RCN Ch. 110. Without converter: Time Warner Ch. 16 or RCN Ch. 110

Also check out [www.rentwars.com](http://www.rentwars.com)

Participate in the RWN Forum, post events, listen to interviews and specials online, and read show supplements that go deeper into the stories covered on the show.



Scott Sommer hosts Met Council's

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- Weekly Housing Court Decision summaries



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# EL INQUILINO HISPANO

## ¿Crearé la guerra en Irak una nueva generación de veteranos sin techo?

Por Patrick Markee  
Traducido por Lightning Translations

Las guerras traen consigo damnificados, forzando a la gente a huir de sus hogares dondequiera ocurran los combates. No obstante, desde la Guerra Civil no se ha librado ninguna batalla sostenida en el territorio de los Estados Unidos; por eso, la mayoría de los estadounidenses no tienen ni idea de cómo la gente pierde sus hogares a causa de las guerras.

En cambio, durante toda la historia de los Estados Unidos han sido muchos los veteranos de las fuerzas armadas sin techo,

principalmente como resultado de incapacidad y trauma relacionados con el combate, además de la falta de beneficios gubernamentales suficientes para proporcionar una ayuda adecuada de vivienda a los veteranos incapacitados y de escasos recursos. A falta de un marcado cambio en las políticas federales, la guerra en Irak creará una nueva generación de veteranos sin techo.

La Oficina federal de Asuntos para Veteranos (VA) calcula que en cualquier noche determinada,

unos 250,000 veteranos se hallan sin techo en todo el país; hasta medio millón de veteranos sufren la falta de un hogar en el transcurso de un año. Esta cifra representa alrededor de 2 por ciento de todos los veteranos vivos en los Estados Unidos. Casi todos—un 97 por ciento—de los veteranos sin techo son hombres; un 56 por ciento son negros o latinos. Aproximadamente 45 por ciento padecen alguna enfermedad mental y más de dos tercios tienen problemas con drogas o alcohol. Más de dos

tercios de los veteranos sin techo sirvieron en las fuerzas armadas por al menos tres años; 47 por ciento sirvieron en la Guerra de Vietnam.

Según una encuesta de escala nacional de las personas sin techo y los que les proporcionan servicios, hecha en 1996, un tercio de hombres sin techo son veteranos y un 23 por ciento de la población total sin techo sirvieron en las fuerzas armadas. En la Ciudad de Nueva York, casi una de

*pasa a la página 4*

### Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 34)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2002 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2003, incluyendo las concesiones de Pataki adoptadas por la Legislatura Estatal el 19 de junio de 1997

Los topes de renta que aparecen en el cuadro son los incrementos máximos que los dueños de edificios pueden cobrar legalmente por los apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad de Nueva York. Son válidos para todos los contratos que comienzan dentro del período de doce meses a partir del 1ro. de octubre de 2002. Los incrementos de alquiler basados en las pautas para la renovación del contrato de 1 o 2 años pueden cobrarse solamente una vez durante el período cubierto por dichas pautas, y deben ser aplicados a la renta legal estabilizada para el 30 de septiembre de 2002. Las cantidades que aparecen en el cuadro y los incrementos para los apartamentos vacíos no se aplican a los apartamentos que estaban sujetos a renta controlada en aquella fecha. No se permite la sobrecarga también conocido como el «impuesto de pobres.»

**Los Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos o Nuevos** En junio de 1997, el gobernador George Pataki, al intentar destruir la regulación de rentas, forzó cambios que les dieron a los caseros una sobrecarga muy grande por los apartamentos vacíos. Una cláusula de la "Reforma al Acta de Regulación de Renta" de 1997 permite que los nuevos alquileres sean incrementados en un porcentaje obligatorio: 20% para un contrato de dos años, y por un contrato de 1 año, 20% de incremento menos la diferencia en el tope de renovación para los contratos de 1 y 2 años. La nueva ley permite también incrementos adicionales para los apartamentos vacíos donde no se habían cobrado incrementos por desocupación por ocho años o más.

**Exceso de Cobro** Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros van a aprovecharse de la complejidad de estas regulaciones y subvenciones, así como del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus aparta-

mentos, para cobrar un alquiler ilegal. Una vez que el inquilino haya tomado posesión del apartamento, puede escoger entre llenar un formulario de queja de exceso de cobro de renta con la oficina de la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal (DHCR), o disputar la cantidad de la renta en la corte de vivienda de la ciudad para que se determine cuál es el alquiler legal.

Si un posible inquilino da muestras de conocer sus derechos, lo más probable es que el casero no firmará ningún contrato con tal inquilino. Los caseros evitan contratar con inquilinos que les pueden dar problemas. El exceso de cobro de alquiler es muy común. Todos los inquilinos deben luchar contra posibles excesos de cobro. Obtenga y llene un formulario *Form RA-89* con la oficina de DHCR para determinar el alquiler correcto en los archivos oficiales. Llame a la DHCR a (718) 739-6400 para obtener un formulario, o búsquelo en el sitio [www.dhcr.state.ny.us](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us).

**La Apelación de la Renta de Mercado Justa** Otro tipo de exceso de cobro sucede fre-

cuentemente cuando se vacía un apartamento que previamente estaba sujeto a renta controlada y se alquila con renta estabilizada. La Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) establece anualmente lo que ellos llaman el "Tope Especial de la Renta de Mercado Justa," el cual es empleado por la DHCR para bajar las rentas de mercado injustas de los inquilinos que llenan el formulario llamado "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" (FMRA). Según la Orden 34, es la Renta de Mercado Justa de HUD o un 50% sobre la renta base máxima. Ningún inquilino de un apartamento de renta estabilizada que fue descontrolado el 1ro de abril de 1984 o después debe dejar de poner a prueba la llamada "Renta Legal Inicial Regulada" (renta de mercado) que los caseros cobran cuando hay descontrol del apartamento. Use el formulario de DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indique claramente que su queja es tanto una queja de "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" como de "exceso de cobro." La corte de vivienda no puede tomar decisión sobre una Apelación de Renta de Mercado. Apartamentos vacíos que antes

estaban controlados en edificios que se han convertido en cooperativas o condominios no se vuelven estabilizados y no satisfacen los requisitos para la Apelación de la Renta Justa de Mercado.

**Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad:** Las personas de 62 años o más que viven en apartamentos estabilizados y cuyos ingresos familiares anuales son de \$20,000 o menos, y que pagan (o enfrentan un incremento de alquiler que los forzaría a pagar) una renta de un tercio o más de sus ingresos, pueden tener derecho al programa de Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad (SCRIE, por sus siglas en inglés), si aplican al Departamento de la Ciudad de Nueva York Sobre las Personas de Mayor Edad, cuya dirección es: SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. Si el alquiler actual de un inquilino que tiene derecho a este programa sobrepasa un tercio del ingreso, no se lo puede reducir, pero es posible evitar incrementos de alquiler en el futuro. Obtenga el formulario de SCRIE por llamar al (212) 442-

1000.

**Unidades de Desván (Lofts)** Los incrementos legales sobre la renta base para las unidades de desván son de un 1 por ciento por un contrato de un año y un 2 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

**Hoteles y Apartamentos de una Sola Habitación** No habrá ningún aumento de la renta este año para los apartamentos de hotel de Clase A, casas de habitaciones, hoteles de clase B (de 30 habitaciones o más), hoteles de una sola habitación, y las casas de habitaciones (Clase B, 6-29 cuartos). No se permiten incrementos para apartamentos vacíos.

**La Desregulación de Rentas Altas y Altos Ingresos** (1) Los apartamentos que legalmente se alquilan por \$2,000 o más por mes y que se desocuparon entre el 7 de julio de 1993 y el 1ro. de octubre de 1993, o en o desde del 1ro de abril de 1994 son sujetos a la desregulación. (2) La misma desregulación se les aplica, para el mismo período establecido en (1), a los apartamentos que legalmente pagan \$2,000 o más mensualmente aunque no se desocupen, si el ingreso total de la familia es más de \$175,000 en los dos años consecutivos previos. Para cumplir los requisitos de esta segunda forma de desregulación, el casero tiene que enviarle un formulario de certificación de ingreso al inquilino entre el 1ro de enero y el 1ro de mayo, así como someter dicho formulario al DHCR y conseguir su aprobación.

Para pautas previas, llame a la RGB al 212-385-2934 o busque el sitio [www.housingnyc.com](http://www.housingnyc.com).

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual	Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años	
Renovación del Contrato	Todas	2%	4%	
Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos	Más de \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18%	20%
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 18%	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 20%
	Menos de \$300	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18% + \$100	20% + \$100
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 18% + \$100	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 20% + \$100
	Renta de \$300 a \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	18% o \$100, lo que sea mayor	20% o \$100, lo que sea mayor
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 18%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 20%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor



## Veteranos

viene de la página 3

cada 10 camas destinadas a hombres en los albergues municipales son reservadas para veteranos; cada año, miles de veteranos sin techo se valen de albergues municipales y privados o residen en espacios públicos.

### La guerra y los veteranos sin techo en la historia de los Estados Unidos

La falta de hogar en los Estados Unidos se remonta a la época colonial; se notó un número creciente de “vagabundos” en las áreas urbanas inmediatamente después de la Guerra Revolucionaria. En 1784 el alcalde de la Ciudad de Nueva York Richard Varick señaló que “Los vagos se multiplican en nuestras manos de manera extraordinaria.” El hacinamiento en las cárceles, casas de corrección y asilos desembocó en la construcción de un nuevo edificio de cuatro pisos en 1796, según el libro *Vivir en el camino sin*

*tener dónde caerse muerto: Los sin techo en la historia de los Estados Unidos (Down and Out on the Road: The Homeless in American History)*, por el historiador Kenneth Kusmer.

Le época después de la Guerra Civil vio un incremento mucho más significativo en la falta de hogar a escala nacional. “Hasta las palabras ‘tramp’ y ‘bum’ (otras palabras inglesas que quieren decir ‘vagabundo’ o ‘vago’), aplicadas a los sin techo, se remontan a la época de la Guerra Civil,” destaca Kusmer. Una causa fue la enorme dislocación económica generada por la guerra y la siguiente recesión a principios de la década de los 1870. Muchas ciudades respondieron aprobando leyes en contra de “la vagancia.” En 1874 se reportaron 98,000 vagos in Boston, más de tres veces la cifra de sólo dos años antes. Desde 1874 a 1878, la cifra de detenciones por vagancia en la Ciudad de Nueva York aumentó

otra mitad más. Muchos de los nuevos nómadas viajando en las vías de los ferrocarriles y congregándose en las ciudades eran veteranos de la Guerra Civil; de ellos, muchos habían sufrido heridas y trauma durante la guerra. La crisis de la falta de hogar en la Gran Depresión, que afectó muchos veteranos de la Primera Guerra Mundial, se redujo marcadamente a principios de los cuarenta por el reclutamiento de decenas de miles de estadounidenses en las fuerzas armadas y por el alza económica de la época de guerra. En la Ciudad de Nueva York, según Kusmer, “En un periodo de dos meses en 1943, 100 residentes del Bowery se inscribieron en las fuerzas armadas, mientras otros 200 consiguieron trabajos en hospitales, restaurantes o los ferrocarriles.”

Sin embargo, cuando la Segunda Guerra Mundial terminó, la falta de hogar de nuevo empezó a ser un problema serio en muchas ciudades. En la Ciudad de Nueva York, hasta 900 hombres se acostaron en el Edificio Anexo de la Casa de Hospedaje (Lodging House Annex, más tarde el Albergue Municipal) en el este de la calle 3, durante el invierno de 1948-49. Si no fuera por el alza económica posguerra y los subsidios que brindó la Ley GI, la falta de hogar habría continuado afectando a muchos miles de veteranos que volvieron de la guerra.

El problema de veteranos sin techo por fin llamó la atención del público en general después de la Guerra de Vietnam. “Sólo unos pocos años después de la guerra,” dice Kusmer, “una nueva ola de personas sin techo, la mayoría de ellas de 20 a 40 años de edad y con un gran número de negros o hispanos, empezaron a aparecer en las esquinas de las calles en las ciudades. Muchos eran veteranos de Vietnam que no podían conseguir trabajo después de haber sido dados de alta.” Para fines de los setenta, cuando la falta de hogar moderna surgió en pleno, una parte significativa del gran número de hombres sin techo que se vio durmiendo al aire libre en la Ciudad de Nueva York y otras grandes ciudades eran veteranos. Muchos padecían el trastorno de estrés post-traumático, problemas con drogas y alcohol e incapacidades físicas causadas por sus experiencias en el combate.

La Guerra del Golfo Pérsico de 1991 también dejó muchos veteranos recuperándose de incapacidades físicas y mentales además de enfrentando la falta de un hogar. En 1997, una encuesta de escala nacional de 1,200 veteranos sin techo que residieron en albergues misionales halló que un 10 por ciento habían servido en la Guerra del Golfo Pérsico. En la Ciudad de Nueva York, los proveedores de servicios a los sin techo también reportaron que estaban ayudando a significativas cifras de veteranos de la “Tormenta del Desierto.”

### Los veteranos sin techo ahora—y después de Irak

La causa principal de la falta de hogar entre veteranos se debe a la falta de los subsidios de incapacidad del VA y otros subsidios públicos para proporcionar ayuda de vivienda suficiente y adecuada. Según la Coalición Nacional por los Veteranos sin Techo (National Coalition for Homeless Veterans), los programas VA de los sin techo ayudan a solamente 40,000 veteranos cada año, menos de un 10 por ciento de la cifra calculada de veteranos que experimentan la falta de hogar anualmente. Dada la frecuencia de trastornos mentales y otras incapacidades entre los veteranos sin techo, es grave la necesidad tanto de vivienda de apoyo (vivienda con servicios de apoyo en el lugar para individuos viviendo con trastornos mentales y otras incapacidades) como ayuda de vivienda asequible. Sin embargo, los subsidios VA y otros subsidios públicos no alcanzan para que la mayoría de los veteranos—específicamente los veteranos en áreas urbanas como la Ciudad de Nueva York—puedan alquilar apartamentos. La cantidad de vivienda de apoyo para los individuos sin techo incapacitados es lamentablemente insuficiente.

Sin un cambio marcado en las políticas federales—including incrementos importantes en la ayuda de vivienda e inversiones en vivienda de apoyo para veteranos sin techo y en riesgo de serlo—no cabe duda que la guerra en Irak creará una nueva generación de veteranos sin techo. Más de 200,000 efectivos de las fuerzas armadas están estacionados en el Golfo Pérsico; muchos más pueden servir en el caso más probable de una prolongada ocupación estadounidense en la región.

Hay varios pasos que el gobierno federal y el Congreso pueden tomar para evitar la falta de hogar entre los veteranos. Estos pasos incluiría:

- **Establecer ayuda de vivienda suficiente como parte del paquete de subsidios para veteranos.** Esto se puede lograr al aumentar los subsidios existentes del VA o al otorgar vales para vivienda alquilada a todos los veteranos que satisfagan los requisitos de ingresos.

- **Proporcionar una cantidad suficiente de vivienda de apoyo para los veteranos sin techo.** Esto se puede lograr incrementando los fondos de los programas existentes de vivienda de apoyo del VA y la Oficina de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano (Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD por sus siglas en inglés).

Desafortunadamente, el proyecto de presupuesto del gobierno Bush en torno a fondos para el VA y HUD es lamentablemente insuficiente. El propósito de Bush reduciría los fondos para importantes

pasa a la página 7

## No se quede helado: ¡ORGANÍZSE!

La ley requiere que su casero proporcione calefacción y agua caliente a las temperaturas siguientes, desde el 1ro de octubre hasta el 31 de mayo:

Desde las 6 a.m. hasta las 10 p.m.: Si la temperatura afuera es de menos de 55 grados, la temperatura dentro debe ser al menos de 68 grados en todo el apartamento.

Desde las 10 p.m. hasta las 6 a.m.: Si la temperatura afuera es de menos de 40 grados, la temperatura dentro debe ser al menos de 55 grados en todo el apartamento.

Se tiene que proporcionar agua caliente a un mínimo de 120 grados en el grifo las 24 horas del día, todo el año.

Si su casero no mantiene estas temperaturas mínimas, usted debe:

- \* Comenzar una “Acción HP” (HP Action) en la Corte de Vivienda. Pida una inspección por orden de la corte y una Orden de Corrección (Order to Correct)
- \* Llamar al Buro Central de Quejas (Central Control Bureau) de la ciudad de Nueva York al (212) 824-4328 inmediatamente, para documentar la violación del casero. Llame repetidamente. Se supone que un inspector vendrá eventualmente, aunque a veces no lo haga.
- \* Exhortar a los otros inquilinos en el edificio a llamar al Central Complaint. Todos deben llamar repetidamente, al menos una vez al día, todos los días en que tenga problemas con la calefacción.
- \* Comprar un buen termómetro para afuera y adentro, para documentar las fechas exactas, las horas, y las temperaturas, tanto afuera como adentro, mientras tenga problemas con la calefacción. Esta documentación es su evidencia
- \* Llamar a la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal del Estado de Nueva York (DHCR, por sus siglas en inglés) al (718) 739-6400, y pedir que le envíen el formulario de Queja de Calefacción y Agua Caliente. Llene el formulario y consigue la

participación de todos los inquilinos en su edificio que pueden firmarlo. Reclame una orden para restaurar la calefacción y el agua caliente, y que se reduzcan y congelen (¡disculpe lo de “congelen!”) todas las rentas.

- \* Necesitarán una fuerte asociación de inquilinos para obligar al casero a proporcionar la calefacción y el agua caliente. Escriban y llamen al casero para demandar las reparaciones y aceite. Prepárense para una huelga de renta (sobre todo con asesoría legal)—de relámpago si es necesario.

Las leyes sobre la calefacción establecen también:

- \* Que el Departamento de Reparaciones de Emergencia de la ciudad le proporcione la calefacción si el casero no lo hace. (No se siente en un bloque de hielo—otra vez, ¡disculpe!—mientras espere que lo haga.)
- \* Una multa de \$250 al casero por cada día que se produzca la violación. (Pero la verdad es que la Corte de Vivienda raras veces impone las multas, y mucho menos las cobra).
- \* Una multa de \$1,000 al casero si algún aparato de control automático se instala en la caldera para mantener la temperatura por debajo del mínimo legal.
- \* Si el tanque de combustible de la caldera está vacío, los inquilinos tienen el derecho de comprar su propio combustible después de haber pasado 24 horas sin calefacción y también sin obtener ninguna respuesta del casero. Esto no se aplica si la caldera está rota y necesita tanto reparación como combustible.

¡Cuidado! ¡proteja su dinero! Si los inquilinos deciden comprar el combustible, hay que seguir los procedimientos legales cuidadosamente. Consiga la ayuda y el consejo de un organizador de inquilinos. La existencia de leyes de calefacción y agua caliente vigentes no garantiza que el gobierno las implemente. No se quede helado por esperar que la ciudad o el estado actúe. ¡Organízese!



# Why You Need to Be in Albany on May 13

By Dave Powell

"I've heard rent stabilization is ending? Should I start looking for another place to live?" Occasionally people call us at Met Council with questions like these. Considering the media void on the rent laws and all the misinformation about tenants' rights out there, those are not unreasonable questions to ask. So I'm going to answer them here and now.

1) Yes, it's true: rent stabilization IS ending. But it's NOT because the state legislature is going to vote to end the rent laws in June. In fact, you may have heard Governor Pataki and Senator Bruno saying that they intend to renew the rent laws, and probably won't bother weakening them further. You might wonder well if the two men most responsible for harming tenant protections in the recent past are now saying they are going to renew the rent laws, doesn't that mean we're safe? Haven't we won a major battle here? The answer is no, and the reason is simple: An as-is renewal is an effective death sentence for the rent laws.

In less than 10 years, we have lost over 167,000 apartments from rent regulation. About 99,000 of those were lost directly, through \$2,000 vacancy decontrol. There are now only about 1,100,000 rent-regulated apartments in the city, containing roughly 2,300,000 of us. With the end of the real-estate boom nowhere in sight, with inflation and rents creeping up to \$2,000 due to MCIs, vacancy increases and bonuses, illegal overcharges, and RGB and MBR increases, we will easily see even greater numbers of regulated units lost if the laws aren't strengthened. Eventually there will be so few regulated tenants that we will lack the political capi-

tal to get the rent laws renewed in any form.

Remember all the damage that was done to us in 1997? That was with 2.6 million of us as potential voters and angry citizens. What will they try at the next expiration period, when there are even fewer of us than there are now? Will we lose all regulated units to vacancy decontrol, or will we lose just enough so that the state legislature can safely tell us to take a hike? Will it take two years? Four years? Seven years or 10? Those are the unknown factors. What is known is that without intensive care, the rent laws are a dead man walking.

No one understands this dynamic better than our enemies in the real-estate industry and their cronies in state government. In fact, they engineered this scenario. That's why Joe Bruno and Governor Pataki are playing it low-key this year; they got their landlord buddies what they needed in 1993, 1997, and 2000. Having consistently attacked the foundations, they can now sit back and just watch the building collapse. All parties involved are crossing their fingers for a relatively quick and politically obscure rent-laws death.

2) Yes, you SHOULD start looking for another place to live—UNLESS you are willing to fight for your home. We sometimes forget that rent regulation is not God-given. It's not even government-given. It's people-driven. People fought for the rights we have now under rent regulation, rights that have been greatly diminished on our watch. Remember, it's not just the amount of your rent we're talking about here. The automatic right to a lease renewal, the freezing of rents through the SCRIP program, the right to stand up for services and repairs without fear of

retribution, the right to join a tenants' association; without the rent laws you can kiss all these goodbye.

All around the world, people endure extreme circumstances to secure their housing. There are people who must stand in front of bulldozers, people who must squat on government land, and people who get shot resisting forced relocation and ethnic cleansing. All you have to do is write a few letters, talk to a few people, and get on a bus to your state's capital. Or you can wait until the rent laws are no more, and get on a bus to Georgia or Oregon or some place with cheaper rent. Basically, your choice is a bus ride now or a bus ride later. If you're not willing to stand up for your rights, you'll want to stay away from Boston and San Diego and a half dozen other cities where tenants are currently fighting just to implement rent regulation.

Right now, we have a real chance of winning back some of the disastrous losses of the recent past. Stronger rent laws are possible. But we may not get this chance again. John Lennon and Yoko Ono once said, "War is Over, If You Want It." I'll make that "Rent Stabilization is Over, If You Let It." May 13th is our day to take action. Legislators still remember the day we converged on Albany back in 1997. For those who are for us, it gives them political leverage and capital. For those who are against us, it makes them more eager to settle things.

Want to keep your home? Want to insure that New York is a city you can afford and will want to live in

five years from now? Be in Albany May 13.

**What you can do:**

- Fill out and mail the coupon below to reserve your seat on the bus to Albany.
- Make a simple commitment to bring at least five people with you. If you are part of a tenants' association, the entire association should be on a bus May 13. Put flyers for May 13 (available from Met Council) under the door of every apartment in your building.
- Spread the word. If you are part of a religious congregation, union, cultural or community group, speak to those in a leadership position about the importance of the rent laws and of a large turnout on May 13. Distribute literature about May 13 to your group.
- Contact your City Councilmember or State Assemblymember and tell them you want them to sponsor a free bus to Albany from your neighborhood. Several elected officials are already doing this. To find out where to contact your elected officials, call the League of Women Voters at (212) 213-5286, or see [www.lwnyc.org](http://www.lwnyc.org)
- If you have at least 10 people who are coming from your building or vicinity, we will have a bus stop near your home. Contact Met Council to work out the details: (212) 979-6238, ext. 6.
- Save this date also: Sunday, June 1. Tenants will rally in Union Square for stronger rent laws.

*Missed an issue of TENANT?*  
see [www.metcouncil.net](http://www.metcouncil.net)



..... clip and mail .....

## Tenant Lobby Day in Albany Get On the Bus May 13

- Yes, I want to join Met Council and thousands of my fellow tenants in Albany on May 13. Bus fares are \$20 each. Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_ for \_\_\_ seats.
- I cannot go, but wish to make a donation so others can go in my place \$\_\_\_.
- I would like to go but cannot afford the full cost of a seat. Here's \$\_\_\_ to reserve my seat.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_ (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (eve)

Please make checks payable to Met Council, Inc. and return this coupon to: 339 Lafayette Street, NYC 10012.

**Save the Date**  
**Met Council's Annual Assembly**

**Saturday, May 3, 2003**  
 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

at DC 37  
 125 Barclay Street (in Manhattan)

**Save and Strengthen  
 the Rent Laws**

**Keynote Speaker: State Senator Liz Krueger**

**Workshops:**  
 Stopping Landlord SLAPP suits  
 Rent Control: What can be done to stop the rent increases  
 Major Capital Improvements: How to fight the increases



# State Senate Blocks Rent-Law Renewal Bill

By Kenny Schaeffer

The State Senate voted April 1 to reject Manhattan Democrat Liz Krueger's "motion to petition" to move two bills renewing rent and eviction protections to the floor.

Krueger's motion, if it had received a majority, would have bypassed Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and forced a vote on either one of two bills: Krueger's bill, S.380, which would strengthen and extend rent laws until 2010, or S.2954, a similar bill which would renew the laws until 2008, introduced by four Republicans Frank Padavan (Queens), new convert Olga Mendez (Bronx), Nicholas Spano (Westchester), and Guy Velella (Bronx-Westchester). All 18 Democrats present voted yes on the motion, but not a single Republican—including Padavan, Spano, Mendez, and Velella—voted for it, ensuring that it would not

gain the necessary majority to force a vote.

The vote makes it more likely that renewing the state's rent laws, which expire on June 15, will be put off until the last minute and then set in a back-room meeting by the Albany power threesome of Governor Pataki, Bruno, and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.

"I am saddened that none of my Republican colleagues—even those on record as supporting the renewal of rent regulations and repeal of \$2,000 vacancy decontrol—was willing to stand up to Joe Bruno and support allowing a vote on this bill," Sen. Krueger declared.

With the rent laws' expiration nearing, Bruno and his colleagues have ridiculed Assembly attempts to have an early vote, saying that the Senate has "more important things to do." This remark indi-

cates the Republicans' intent that rent regulations be held hostage for concessions on budgetary issues such as fair taxes, health care, education, and public assistance.

However, indications are that Silver, having learned the lessons of 1997, is not willing to put the rent laws on the table or make any further concessions. Constant and increasing pressure over the next two months—including maximum turnout in Albany on May 13—will be critical in preserving and strengthening rent and eviction protections.

The Senate's refusal to consider the bills renewing the rent laws shows once again that downstate Republicans who claim to be pro-tenant are merely posturing. Velella, Padavan, Mendez, and Spano are certain to put the bill they sponsored on their campaign literature to show

their "pro-tenant" credentials, but they wouldn't vote to get the Senate to act on it. As Liz Krueger pointed out during her reelection campaign last November, the only truly meaningful vote a state senator gets to cast is the one for majority leader, and the downstate votes swing to Bruno every time. Though they have substantial numbers of regulated tenants in their districts, the downstate Republicans' actual votes support the rapaciousness of landlords who fund the Republican party. Their claim to be tenants' allies is pure deceit.

Sadly, the Republican hold on the State Senate was solidified last year by the Assembly's cooperation in allowing the Senate Republicans carte blanche in redistricting after the 2000 census, in return for reciprocal favors. Bruno used this

power to try to unseat Sen. Eric Schneiderman, one of the upper house's more outspoken Democrats, by eliminating his Upper West Side district and putting him in a new Latino-majority district stretching into Washington Heights and the South Bronx. Bruno also protected Velella, who drew a strong Democratic challenger in 2000, by excluding communities of color in the Bronx and Westchester to create a bizarre district shaped like a lobster shaking hands with a shocked cat (see Tenant, March 2002).

Whatever the outcome over the next two months, it is certain that the many defects and loopholes in the existing law will not all be addressed. The next phase should include increasing the call for restoration of home rule

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## NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 34)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2002 through Sept. 30, 2003, including the Pataki vacancy bonuses adopted by the State Legislature on June 19, 1997

This rent guidelines table shows the maximum increases landlords in New York City can legally charge for rent stabilized apartments on all leases commencing in the twelve-month period beginning October 1, 2002. Increases in rent based on the 1- or 2-year renewal guidelines can be charged only once during the period covered by the guidelines, and must be applied to the legal stabilized rent on September 30, 2002. The above guidelines and vacancy bonuses do not apply to an apartment which was rent controlled on that date. There is no low rent supplement, a.k.a. poor tax, allowed.

### Sublease Allowance

Landlords can charge a 10 percent increase during the term of a sublease that commences during this guideline period.

### Vacancy Leases

In June 1997, Governor George Pataki, as a part of his efforts to destroy rent regulation, forced changes that gave landlords large vacancy bonuses. Provisions of his Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 allow the rents of apartments to rise by a statutory percentage: 20 percent for a 2-year lease, and 20 percent minus the difference between the 1- and 2-year renewal guidelines for 1-year leases. The new law also allows additional vacancy increases for apartments which have had no vacancy allowance in eight or more years.

### Rent Overcharges

Tenants should be aware that many landlords will exploit the complexities of these guidelines and bonuses, and the tenant's unfamiliarity with the apartment's rent history, to charge an illegal

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent	One-year Lease	Two-year Lease	
<b>Renewal Leases</b>	All	2%	4%	
<b>Vacancy leases</b>	More than \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18%	20%
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18%	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%
	Less than \$300	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18% plus \$100	20% plus \$100
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18% plus \$100	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20% plus \$100
	Rent \$300 to \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	18% or \$100, whichever is greater	20% or \$100, whichever is greater
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 18%, or \$100, whichever is greater	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%, or \$100, whichever is greater

rent. The tenant can choose between filing an overcharge complaint with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal or challenging the rent in Housing Court to get a determination of the legal rent.

A prospective tenant who expresses knowledge of their rights will probably not be given a lease to sign. Landlords avoid renting to tenants who may be troublesome. Overcharging is very common. Every tenant should challenge possible overcharge. With DHCR, obtain and fill out *Form RA-89* to determine the correct rent from official records. Call DHCR at (718) 739-6400 to obtain the form or go to: [www.dhcr.state.ny.us](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us)

### Fair Market Rent Appeal

Another type of overcharge frequently occurs at the time that a previously rent controlled apart-

ment becomes vacant and is re-rented as a stabilized unit. The Rent Guidelines Board annually sets what they call the "Special Fair Market Rent Guideline" that is used by DHCR to lower unfair market rents for tenants who file the Fair Market Rent Appeal (FMRA). Under Order 34, it is HUD Fair Market Rent or 50% above the maximum base rent. No stabilized tenant of an apartment that was decontrolled on or after April 1, 1984 should fail to challenge the so-called Initial Legal Regulated Rent (market rent) that landlords charge upon decontrol. Use *DHCR Form RA-89*. Indicate clearly that your complaint is both a complaint of "overcharge" and "Fair Market Rent Appeal." The Housing Court cannot determine a Fair Market Rent Appeal. Formerly controlled vacant apartments in buildings converted to co-ops or

condos do not become stabilized and are not eligible for a Fair Market Rent Appeal.

### Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption

Rent stabilized seniors, 62 years or older, whose disposable annual household income is \$20,000 or less and who pay (or face a rent increase that would cause them to pay) one-third or more of that income in rent may be eligible for a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) if they apply to the NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit at 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. If an otherwise eligible tenant's current rent level is already above one-third of income, it cannot be rolled back, but future rent increases may be avoided. Obtain the SCRIE application form by calling (212) 442-1000.

### Loft Units

Legalized loft unit increases above the base rent are 1 percent for a one-year lease and 2 percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

### Hotels and SROs

There will be no rent increases this year for Class A apartment hotels, lodging houses, Class B hotels (30 rooms or more), single room occupancy (SROs) hotels, and rooming houses (Class B, 6-29 rooms). No vacancy allowance is permitted.

### High-rent, High-income Deregulation

(1) Apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month that became vacant from July 7, 1993 through October 1, 1993, or on April 1, 1994 and thereafter are subject to deregulation. (2) The same deregulation applies in the time periods set forth in (1) above to apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month without their becoming vacant if the total household income exceeds \$175,000 in each of the prior two consecutive years. To be eligible for this second form of deregulation, the landlord must send an income certification form to the tenant between January 1 and May 1 and file it with and get the approval of DHCR.

For previous guidelines call the RGB at 212-385-2934 or go to [www.housingnyc.com](http://www.housingnyc.com).



## Veterans

*continued from page 1*

1878, the number of vagrancy arrests in New York City rose by half. Many of the new nomads riding the rails and congregating in cities were Civil War veterans, and many had suffered physical injuries and trauma during the war.

The homelessness crisis of the Great Depression, which affected many World War I veterans, was dramatically abated in the early 1940s by the enlistment of tens of thousands of Americans in the armed forces and by the wartime economic upswing. In New York City, according to Kusmer, "In one two-month period in 1943, 100 Bowery residents joined the armed forces, while another 200 acquired jobs in hospitals, restaurants, or on the railroads."

With the end of World War II, however, homelessness re-emerged as a significant problem in many cities. In New York City, as many as 900 men bedded down in the Lodging House Annex (later the Municipal Shelter) on East 3rd Street during the 1948-49 winter. Homelessness would have continued to affect many thousands of returning veterans, were it not for the postwar economic upturn and the benefits provided by the GI Bill.

The problem of homeless veterans finally came to the attention of the general public after the Vietnam War. "Only a few years after the end of the war," Kusmer writes, "a new wave of homeless

persons, mostly in their 20s and 30s and disproportionately black or Hispanic, began to appear on city street corners. Many were Vietnam veterans, unable to find work after being discharged." By the late 1970s, when modern homelessness fully emerged, a significant portion of the homeless men seen sleeping outdoors in vast numbers in New York City and other large cities were veterans. Many suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, drug and alcohol problems, and physical disabilities caused by their experiences in combat.

The 1991 Gulf War also left many veterans recovering from physical and mental disabilities and confronting homelessness. In 1997, a nationwide survey of 1,200 homeless veterans who resided at mission shelters found that 10 percent had served in the Gulf War. In New York City, homeless service providers also reported assisting significant numbers of Desert Storm veterans.

### Homeless Veterans Now— and After Iraq

The principal cause of homelessness among veterans is the failure of VA disability benefits and other public benefits to provide adequate and appropriate housing assistance. According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, the VA's homeless programs assist only 40,000 veterans each year, less than 10 percent of the estimated number of veterans who experience homelessness annually. Given the high prevalence of mental illness and other disabilities among homeless veterans, the need for supportive housing (housing with on-site support services for individuals living with mental illness and other disabili-

ties) and affordable-housing assistance is critical. Nevertheless, VA benefits and other public benefits are not adequate to enable most veterans—particularly those in urban areas like New York City—to rent apartments, and the national supply of supportive housing for disabled homeless individuals is woefully inadequate.

Without a dramatic change in federal policies—including substantial increases in housing assistance and supportive housing investments for homeless and at-risk veterans—there is no doubt that the war on Iraq will create a new generation of homeless veterans. More than 200,000 members of the armed forces are stationed in the Persian Gulf, and many more may serve in the likely event of a prolonged United States occupation of the region.

There are several steps the federal government and Congress could take to prevent homelessness among veterans. These would include:

- **Mandating adequate housing assistance as part of the package of veterans' benefits.** This could be accomplished by augmenting existing VA benefits or by giving rental-housing vouchers to all income-eligible veterans.

- **Providing an adequate supply of supportive housing for homeless veterans.** This could be accomplished by expanding funding for existing VA and Department of Housing and Urban Development supportive-housing programs.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's current budget proposal for VA and HUD funding is woefully inadequate. Bush's proposal would reduce money for vital federal housing programs, and proposes changes to the housing-voucher program that threaten its

long-term viability. There is no indication that the changes in federal policies necessary to prevent a new wave of homelessness among American veterans are even a remote possibility. It is much more likely that Bush's budget policies will contribute to increased homelessness among veterans, as well as among low-income families and individuals.

Of course, the most immediate and effective way to prevent homelessness among a new generation of veterans would be to bring the troops in Iraq and the Persian Gulf back home. It is also essential to recall that the war effort will displace countless Iraqis and destroy an untold number of Iraqi homes. Aside from the political challenges that will confront postwar Iraq, the rebuilding effort must address the housing needs (as well as the nutritional and health-care needs) of Iraqis and refugees, to avert a wave of homelessness in the Persian Gulf region.

*Patrick Markee is senior policy analyst at Coalition for the Homeless.*

## Albany

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through repeal of the Rockefeller-Urstadt law, now that the City Council has finally spoken on this issue.

The 18 State Senators who voted to act on renewing the rent laws were Democrats Liz Krueger, David Paterson, Tom Duane, Carl Andrews, Neil Breslin, Byron Brown, Ruben Diaz, Martin Dilan, Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Carl Kruger, Velmanette Montgomery, George Onorato, Kevin Parker, John Sabini, Ada Smith, Malcolm Smith, William Stachowski, and Toby Ann Stavisky.

## Veteranos

*viene de la página 3*

programas federales de vivienda y propone cambios al programa de vales de vivienda que amenazan su viabilidad a largo plazo. No hay señal alguna de que los cambios necesarios para evitar una nueva ola de la falta de hogar entre veteranos estadounidenses sean siquiera una posibilidad remota. Es mucho más probable que la política de presupuesto de Bush contribuya a una mayor falta de hogar tanto entre veteranos como familias e individuos de bajos ingresos.

Por supuesto, la manera más directa y eficaz de evitar la falta de hogar entre una nueva generación de veteranos sería traer a casa a las tropas en Irak y el Golfo Pérsico. También es preciso recordar que la guerra desplazar a un sinnúmero de iraquíes y destruirá una cifra incalculable de hogares iraquíes. Aparte de los desafíos políticos que el Irak del periodo posguerra enfrentará, las actividades de reconstrucción tienen que abordar las necesidades de vivienda (además de las necesidades de alimentación y salud) de los iraquíes y los refugiados, para evitar una ola de falta de hogar en la región del Golfo Pérsico.

*Patrick Markee es analista de política principal en la Coalición por los Sin Techo (Coalition for the Homeless).*

## 2003 Rent Guidelines Board Schedule

The Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) is the city agency which determines rent guidelines for renewal leases on all rent-stabilized apartments in New York City. Although landlord profits from stabilized housing have risen to new heights over the past 4 years, the RGB has still hammered tenants with rent increases that its own data reveal are unfair. This year, with landlords already screaming about fuel costs and the property-tax increase, tenants will have to come out in record numbers to stop the highest rent increases in a decade. Below is the current schedule of RGB hearings and votes.

all addresses are in Manhattan

\* indicates meetings at which tenant turnout is important

### MEETING TYPE/DATE/LOCATION/TIME

Public Meeting/**Tuesday, April 15**/Dept of City Planning, Spector Hall,  
22 Reade Street/9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Public Meeting/**Friday, April 25**/Dept of City Planning, Spector Hall,  
22 Reade Street/9:30 am - 12:30 pm

\* Invited Testimony/**Thursday, May 1**/Dept of City Planning, Spector Hall,  
22 Reade Street/9:30 am - 5:30 pm

\* **Preliminary Vote/Monday, May 5/Alexander Hamilton US Custom House,  
basement auditorium, 1 Bowling Green/ 5:30 - 9:30 pm**

Public Meeting/**Tuesday, June 3**/Dept of City Planning, Spector Hall,  
22 Reade Street/9:30 am - 12:30 pm

\* **Public Testimony/Tuesday, June 17/Cooper Union, the Great Hall,  
7 East 7 Street/ 10:00 am - 10:00 pm**

\* **Final Vote/Thursday, June 19/Alexander Hamilton US Custom House, basement auditorium,  
1 Bowling Green/ 5:30 - 9:30 pm**

To confirm times, dates and locations, call the RGB at (212) 385-2934 or see [www.housingnyc.com](http://www.housingnyc.com)

## Save the Rent Laws!

1) Send separate letters to the Mayor, the City Council Speaker, the Governor, your state Senator, the Assembly Speaker, and your Assemblymember. We are asking state legislators, including Assembly Speaker Silver, to do everything they can to enact stronger rent laws, Governor Pataki to pressure Senate Majority Leader Bruno to strengthen the rent laws, and city officials to call upon their colleagues in Albany and the governor to do the same. Please send a copy of your letters to Met Council.

2) Write these letters on your own paper. Add your own comments – describe your own situation, or changes in your neighborhood – to bolster the argument for stronger rent laws. If you are in a Section 8 or Mitchell Lama development that is vulnerable to market rents, add that you

want buildings like your to be placed under rent stabilization. If you are being evicted because your landlord wants your apartment for “personal use”, add that you want the loopholes that allow for these evictions to be closed. It is very important to write about how you directly benefit from the rent laws as opposed to making a rhetorical argument.

3) Get your friends and neighbors to write letters. If for some reason they are unable or unwilling to write letters, they can call or e-mail these elected officials. However, personal letters are taken much more seriously than phone calls, e-mails, petitions or postcards. For additional contact information for elected officials call the League of Women Voters at (212) 725-3541 or see [www.lwvncny.org](http://www.lwvncny.org).

## Council

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tenant issues brought before it. These include improving protection against lead-paint poisoning, a fair Rent Guidelines Board, and restructuring rent increases for rent-controlled tenants, all of which were mentioned by tenants and advocates testifying at the Council’s February hearings on the rent laws.

On March 26, Mayor Bloomberg signed the renewal bills into law. Tenant activists took the bill-signing ceremony as an opportunity to request that Bloomberg call upon his fellow Republicans, Pataki and the State Senate majority, to pass stronger rent laws before the June 15 expiration date.

Packed tightly into City Hall’s “Blue Room,” tenant after tenant thanked the mayor for signing the bill, and asked him to come to Albany to fight for stronger rent laws. Some also addressed the need for a more equitable RGB and an expanded SCRIE program, in which the mayor plays a more direct role.

Bloomberg habitually interrupted those speaking, saying in

effect that he would lobby with tenants, and that we were preaching to the choir. He also said he favored city home rule over the rent laws. “Everybody in this room is in favor of the rent laws,” the mayor told the crowd. “We should be spending our time lobbying Albany.”

But since the mayor had not come out explicitly in favor of stronger rent laws, many in the room sensed that the message was not being received. As the testimonies continued, they became more explicit, with tenants reminding the mayor that his active support was needed, and that an “as is” renewal of the rent laws, without removing loopholes, was effectively a death sentence for rent regulations. “We watched in awe,” said one tenant, “at the vigor with which you went after control of the Board of Ed.... We need you to launch that kind of a campaign.”

Finally, Judith Goldiner of the Legal Aid Society put the question directly: “Mayor Bloomberg, will you lobby with us to end vacancy decontrol?” The answer, in substance, was “I’ll consider it,” confirming suspicions that Bloomberg is not yet on board for

### SAMPLE LETTER

I am a rent-regulated tenant and I am very concerned about the renewal of the rent laws in June of 2003.

However, renewing the rent laws “as is” is simply not enough. We need the State Senate and the Governor to repeal \$2,000 vacancy decontrol and eliminate 20% vacancy increases. These two measures alone have taken more than 99,000 apartments out of rent regulation in less than ten years. I want you to do everything in your power to ensure that this happens.

Very little affordable housing is being built in New York City. Rent-regulated housing is the largest source of affordable apartments for low, moderate, and middle-income New Yorkers. We need to strengthen our rent laws and cannot afford to lose anymore rent regulated apartments.

Please write back and let me know how you plan to strengthen the rent laws.

Sincerely,

*Sign your name, and address*  
(phone number optional)

stronger rent laws. The presence of Gifford Miller, who again affirmed his pledge to lobby for stronger rent laws, made for an interesting dynamic. Although the speaker of the Council is traditionally at bill signings, Miller is expected to challenge Bloomberg in the 2005 mayoral race.

So there you have folks: City Hall down, Albany to go, and Bloomberg needs work. We knew going into this year that the real fight was in the state legislature (see page 6). Dig in your heels and call all your friends, because this is where the going gets tough.

## WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

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| <p><b>LOWER EAST SIDE BRANCH at</b><br/>Cooper Square Committee<br/>61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. &amp; Bowery)<br/><b>Tuesdays ..... 6:30 pm</b></p> <p><b>CHELSEA COALITION ON HOUSING</b><br/>Covers 14<sup>th</sup> St. to 30<sup>th</sup> St., 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the Hudson River.<br/>322 W. 17<sup>th</sup> St. (basement), CH3-0544<br/><b>Thursdays ..... 7:30 pm</b></p> <p><b>GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side)</b><br/>525 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St. (btwn. Aves. A &amp; B) Lower East Side tenants only, 212-533-2541.</p> <p><b>HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA</b><br/>Covers 135<sup>th</sup> St. to 165<sup>th</sup> St. from Riverside Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave.,<br/>544 W. 157<sup>th</sup> St. (basement entrance).<br/><b>Thursdays ..... 8 pm</b></p> | <p><b>LOWER MANHATTAN LOFT TENANTS</b><br/>St. Margaret’s House, Pearl &amp; Fulton Sts., 212-539-3538<br/><b>Wednesdays ..... 6 pm-7 pm</b></p> <p><b>VILLAGE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS</b><br/>26 Perry St. (basement), 212-741-2994<br/><b>Wednesdays ..... 6 pm</b></p> <p><b>WEST SIDE TENANTS UNION</b><br/>200 W. 72nd St. Room 63; 212-595-1274<br/><b>Tuesday &amp; Thursday ..... 2-5 pm</b><br/><b>Tuesday &amp; Wednesday 6-7:45 pm</b></p> |
|---|---|



## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL ON HOUSING

*Met Council is a citywide tenant union.*

*Our phones are open to the public  
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays from 1:30 to 5 p.m.*

*We can briefly answer your questions, help you  
with organizing or refer you to other help.*

# 212-979-0611

## Join Met Council

Membership: Individual, \$25 per year; Low-income, \$15 per year; family (voluntary: 2 sharing an apartment), \$30 per year. Supporting, \$40 per year. Sustaining, min. of \$100 per year (indicate amount of pledge). For affiliation of community or tenant organizations, large buildings, trade unions, etc. call 212-979-6238.

My apartment is  controlled  stabilized  unregulated  other \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in volunteering my time to Met Council. Please call me to schedule times and duties. I can  counsel tenants,  do office work,  lobby public officials,  attend rallies/protests.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send your check or money order with this form to:  
Metropolitan Council on Housing, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012