



**Thursday, June 18, 2015**

**Public Hearing on proposed rent adjustment for renewal leases for apartments, lofts, hotels and other housing units subject to the Rent Stabilization Law of 1969 and the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974.**

Good Evening.

My name is Eric Adams, and I am the Brooklyn Borough President. Welcome to Brooklyn!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the 2.6 million Brooklynites that call this borough home, and perhaps more importantly, on behalf of the residents that live in the roughly 300,000 rent-regulated units in Brooklyn.

While this hearing is an important venue for discussing the Rent Guideline Board's proposals, all of this may be moot if Governor Andrew Cuomo and the State Senate do not act to renew and strengthen our rent protection laws.

I have led the charge to pressure Governor Cuomo to act. In fact, I camped outside the Governor's office last night to demand action. The Governor has shown his willingness to act on issues of importance to him, and the time is now for him to recognize that this issue should be at the top of his priority list.

Too many lives are at stake for him not to.

In 2014, there were nearly 3.5 million total housing units in New York City. Over 2 million of those were rental units, of which, almost 1.1 million were rent-regulated.

Currently, the tenant rent burden for rent-regulated apartments is at such a level that poorer residents are becoming increasingly strained in its affordability. Overall, 43 percent of rent stabilized tenants pay more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing costs, generally considered the cut-off to define an individual as rent-burdened.

According to MNS' Brooklyn Rental Market Report from May 2015, the average Brooklyn rent in May of 2015 was \$3,412 for a two-bedroom apartment, an increase of 1.5 percent from May 2014, which puts strain on family budgets.

Being forced to forego needed items such as food or medicine to pay the rent is not a practice Brooklynites or any other New Yorker should have to face.

The current proposal from the Rent Guidelines Board is to raise rents in regulated units by up to 2% for units renewing a one-year lease and from between .5% to 3.5% for two-year renewals. In the case of certain subleases, the hike could be upwards of 10%.

These proposals are unacceptable.

My office remains in favor of a complete rent freeze for these one million plus households in rent-regulated apartments. These proposals would do too much to unduly burden those living on tight household budgets, and would threaten their quality of life. We must not allow for New York City's working class residents to be systematically priced out of their communities and pushed out of the city. By protecting our tenants with a rent freeze, we will take a step to ensure that Brooklyn remains a city that welcomes people of all means.