



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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Eleazar Bueno, Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

June 1, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, N Y 12224

Hon. Andrew McLaughlin
RGB Executive Director
NYC Rent Guidelines Board
1 Centre St, Suite 2210
New York, NY 10007

Re: Resolution urging the NYC Rent Guidelines Board to grant no rent increases for Rent Regulated Apartments for One- or Two-Year Leases Commencing October 1st, 2021.

Dear Governor Cuomo and Executive Director, McLaughlin:

At the General Meeting, Tuesday, May 25, 2021, with a unanimous vote of 33 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 0 not voting, Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution, urging the NYC Rent Guidelines Board to not grant any rent increases for any rent-regulated apartment for all 1- and 2-year renewal leases commencing October 1st, 2021.

Whereas: At a scheduled public hearing on May 5th, 2021 the NYC Rent Guidelines Board proposed a percentage of rent increases for the current "base rent" for rent-stabilized apartments that will be finalized in June and together with such further adjustments as may be authorized by law the following proposed ranges of annual adjustment to be used for a determination of the new rent order are:

- For a **one-year** renewal lease commencing on or after **October 1, 2021**, and on or before **September 30, 2022: 0% to 2%**
- For a **two-year** renewal lease commencing on or after **October 1, 2021**, and on or before **September 30, 2022: 1% to 3%**; and ...

Whereas: The NYC Rent Guidelines Board reported in their 2021 Income and Affordability Study that the City of New York lost an average of 516,600 jobs in 2020, an 11.1% decrease from 2019 total job levels; and...

Whereas: NYC's average annual unemployment rate rose for the first time in eight years to 12.3%, up from a historic low of 3.9% in 2019 becoming the highest level recorded in at least the last 45 years; and...

Whereas: For the 52 weeks of March 14, 2020, through March 6, 2021 (the first full year of the pandemic), the total number of initial unemployment claims is up 647% (or 2,133,298 claims) in NYC as compared to the same period in the prior year; and...

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Whereas: According to a recent report from The New School, there is an estimated "underemployment" rate of 24.5% in NYC as of December of 2020; and...

Whereas: The United States Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey showed that between March 17-29 of this year, 12.7% of renter households in the NY Metro area were considered "housing insecure", meaning either "not current on rent" or having "slight or no confidence that one's household can pay next month's rent on time"; and...

Whereas: In 2020, the average rental costs rose 2.0% in the NYC area, versus an overall increase in the Consumer Price Index of 1.7%; and...

Whereas: The NYC Comptroller's March 2021 economic forecast states New York City employment isn't expected to fully rebound to pre-pandemic rates until the spring and summer of 2022; and...

Whereas: The Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) also forecast employment is projected to remain below the prior 2019 peak until 2023; and...

Whereas: By the end of 2025, the Independent Budget Office forecasts an unemployment rate of 7.1 percent, roughly double what the unemployment rate was before the pandemic; and ...

Whereas: The greatest proportional wage decreases were in the Accommodation and Food Services as well as Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industries, which saw total wages decrease in real terms by 62.8% and 40.9%, respectively; and...

Whereas: Average employment in the two aforementioned industries fell by 59.3% and 52.3%, respectively; and...

Whereas: According to the NYU Furman Center, Community District 12's unemployment rate has historically lied higher than that of the New York City average (8.69% in CD12 while only 4.6 - 4.7% citywide in 2017 alone); and...

Whereas: According to NYC Planning, 43.4% of households in Community District 12 were already rent-burdened (spending more than 35% percent of household income on rent) by the start of 2018; and...

Whereas: According to the NYU Furman Center, 28.3% of renter households in Washington Heights/Inwood were severely rent-burdened (spending more than 50% of household income on rent) in 2018; and...

Whereas: According to the NYC Rent Guidelines Board, rent-stabilized tenants are reported to have a median gross rent-to-income ratio of 36.0%, meaning a majority of rent-stabilized tenants are not able to afford their apartments, based on the HUD benchmark; and ...

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Whereas, CD12's low AMI, compared to city-wide AMI, and the rising cost of living result in high rent burden and overcrowding for a significant percentage of households during an enduring tumultuous period; and...

Whereas: According to the NYC Small Business Services' Inwood Manhattan Commercial District Needs Assessment in Partnership with the Washington Heights BID, it was reported that the majority of businesses employing many of the community's residents fall largely within the Accommodations, Food Services, and Retail Trades sectors; and...

Whereas: According to the NYC Small Business Services' Inwood Manhattan Commercial District Needs Assessment in Partnership with the Washington Heights BID, it was reported that when observing local Inwood residents' employment, it was found that 16% alone work in Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, and Entertainment while 14% work in retail trade (which, when combined account for 30% of the Inwood community alone); and

Whereas: Data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development shows that "New York City has the largest number of people who are homeless of any city in the nation and New York City reported a total of 78,604 sheltered and unsheltered persons in January of 2019, followed by Los Angeles, with 56,257 persons, and Seattle, with 11,199"; therefore be it...

Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan strongly urges the NYC Rent Guidelines Board to not grant any rent increases for any rent-regulated apartment for all 1- and 2-year renewal leases commencing October 1st 2021.

Sincerely,



Eleazar Bueno
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman

Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Alfred Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member