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UPDATED 5 HOURS AGO

## City Council takes aim at landlords

Lawmakers introduced 18 bills to empower tenants and curtail harassment

JOE ANUTA



TWEET



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Bloomberg News

The City Council **introduced 18 tenant harassment bills** on Wednesday that could have wide-ranging effects on landlords, residents and several city agencies. With the backing of Speaker Corey Johnson, the legislative package is likely to pass in some form.

The package illustrates both the City Council's disdain for state rent laws, which allow landlords to raise prices in rent-regulated apartments each time the unit becomes vacant and after they make capital improvements, and lawmakers' inability to change them. Instead, the council is flexing its power to collect more information about how landlords are operating within the state's framework and to penalize them if they cross the line into illegal territory.

Generally speaking, the bills would require agencies such as the Department of Buildings to beef up inspections and audits of buildings that are undergoing renovations to ensure no tenants are being harassed into leaving their apartments and giving landlords a coveted vacancy bonus. For similar reasons, landlords would need to provide more insight into the rent rolls and the work they are doing to both the city and tenants, and face stiffer penalties if they submit false information. Two bills also would shed light on buyout offers,

which landlords such as [Steve Croman](#) made infamous in their bid to oust rent-regulated tenants.

By grouping the bills into legislative packages, the council can make a big splash and give many members the opportunity to show constituents they are tackling issues of import. But the sheer volume of dense legalese being considered will make it difficult for stakeholders and advocates to adequately scrutinize the legislation at a Dec. 13 hearing.

Many of the council's qualms with state rent laws could become moot next year. Democrats will take control of the Senate in January, and reforming rent regulation is [high on their list](#) of priorities.

*Letter  
— to the —  
Editor*

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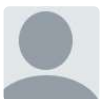


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**sandergj** • 6 hours ago

The answer is socialism pure and simple. Take control of all public interest projects and housing were the Landlord is eliminated and an honest bureaucratic system takes their place for the good of

the people. The Democratic party is headed in the right direction but going much too slow, we need more activists like Booker to bring about socialism more quickly and with wider and deeper control of the public.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**from\_the\_boroughs** → sandergj · 2 hours ago

Right. Look at how great the NYC Housing Authority is . . . or not. Socialism? Really? Sounds to me like a cowardly of advocating something even you and Mayor Bill (and Booker and Bernie and the newly elected congresswoman who the media love bit whose name I forgot, etc.) know full well has zero chance of ever happening and, therefore, putting yourself in a position to always be able to point out how dumb or evil everybody else is, and bleat and belch about how much better things would be if only everybody had listened to you.

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**Barry Schechter** · a day ago

Of course they politically ignore the illegal basement issues where landlords are taking cash payments for apartments that are not up to code and that are dangerous. Rent gouging goes on in that area as well. Feds need to come in and takeover housing, oh wait, they're no better. We have capitalists that capitalize on greed, socialists that play reality TV stars, and us in the middle.

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**StanChaz** → Barry Schechter · 8 hours ago

What do you expect in a rapidly gentrifying city where wages do not keep pace with rents for so so many?

Instead of focusing on the false caravan "invasion" at our Southern border we should be condemning the very real invasion of New York City, the invasion fostered and enabled by greed-driven real estate developers whose actions drive out long time residents, or force them into sub-standard housing such as this.

Hmmm. You call this home? We like the place. It has potential. Now get out.

Your life, your roots, your needs, your neighborhood, your very existence ...is of no importance to us.

How dare you stand in the way of progress! ...or our greed?

How dare you stand up and demand to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity? Out!

Rather than coming in and evicting these refugee basement-dwelling tenants on a wholesale basis, or ignoring them as has been the case for far too long, the City is wisely exploring programs to legalize and regulate these basement apartment where feasible, by helping owners bring them up to code.

It may not solve this multi-faceted problem, but at least it will help bring these issues out of the shadows.

For if the gentrification invasion continues unabated & unremedied there will be no "middle" left.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Crosby** → StanChaz • 8 hours ago

"False"? Are you joking? I suggest you put down the Kool-Aid and actually watch something besides CNN. It is in fact, an invasion.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Barry Schechter** → StanChaz • 8 hours ago

Hi StanChaz. I have to respectfully disagree that gentrification is the issue, the other G word is the issue, that I do agree with you. The City's administrative bureaucrats have talked about legalizing basement apartments and that's where it will stop. Most of these apartments are not in buildings where the City can walk in, unannounced, and mete out fines - they're in private homes. Inspectors leave a note, come back, no one home, administrative closure - end of case. DOB inspectors are allowed to call the NYPD for assistance - might as well laugh out loud now. The City and State should stop bickering with each other and improve the corridor's transportation infrastructure so it doesn't take 3 -4 hours to get from Brooklyn to Whitestone. Wages aren't under the control of bureaucrats - taxes are. As long as the sheeple believe that tax cuts are going to enable them and that corporate charity is going to increase (wage hikes) because of them, shows we have learned nothing over the past 27 years of tax cuts for businesses.

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