

City Council Puts Slumlords on Notice, Passes 18 Tenant Protection Bills in a Day

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Bathroom in Mahfar's 102 Norfolk St., July 2014

Yesterday, the city took another big step towards enforcing landlord accountability. City Council passed a whopping 18 bills that provide a framework for greater protections for tenants against harassment and unsafe living conditions.

Among the bills is Councilmember Helen Rosenthal's Intro. 1523, which would create an Office of the Tenant Advocate within the DOB. It would be responsible for monitoring Tenant Protection Plans as well as fielding complaints and questions from tenants about construction issues. (Big real estate probably isn't happy about this (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/2017/04/report-big-real-estate-against-new-city-council-tenant-advocate-bill-that-would-curb-construction-as-harassment/>).)

Other approved bills are aimed specifically at ending construction as a form of harassment. Employing such tactics is a growing problem, particularly here on the Lower East Side. Just ask residents under the thumb of slumlords like Steve Croman, Ben Shaoul, Jared Kushner, or Samy Mahfar.



Rosenthal reassured, “While many at DOB do important work on behalf of tenants, the bureaucracy just isn’t in place to make tenants’ voices heard. This bill will change that, giving tenants a dedicated watchdog and workhorse on their behalf...”

Out of the 18 bills, the three written by Council Member Rosenthal include:

- Intro. 1523, which would create an Office of the Tenant Advocate within the Department of Buildings.
- Intro. 944, a part of the Stand for Tenant Safety package, which would impose additional penalties for performing construction work without a permit and increase oversight for buildings where such work has been performed.
- Intro. 347, which would allow Housing Court judges to award damages to tenants who bring successful harassment claims against their landlord.

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