

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 9, 2017 AUGUST 9, 2017

New York City Council Passes Stand for Tenant Safety Legislative Package, Endorsed by Progressive Caucus, to End Construction as Harassment



New York, NY – On August 9, 2017, the New York City Council passed legislation that will provide greater protection for tenants, especially in regards to the use of construction as harassment by landlords. The Stand for Tenant Safety (STS) legislation is a part of the Progressive Caucus’ ADVANCEMENT policy platform. Championed by Progressive Caucus Members and tenants and advocates in the Stand for Tenant Safety (STS) Coalition (<http://www.standfortenantsafety.com/>), eleven of the twelve bills (<https://nycprogressives.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/sts-full-summary-of-dob-legislation.pdf>) in the STS legislative package will be moved to passage to strengthen the ability of the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) to protect tenants in regards to construction harassment. The STS Coalition is a citywide alliance of grassroots tenant organizations and legal service groups collaborating with the Progressive Caucus and the eleven City Council prime sponsors to push for the STS legislation.

“I am proud to Stand for Tenant Safety. This is a victory for everyone- for the advocates who have been tirelessly working on the ground in our neighborhoods and for the tenants who are being driven out of their rent stabilized homes by unscrupulous landlords. The citywide coalition’s assistance with crafting the legislation has been paramount,” said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso, co-Chair of**

the Progressive Caucus and lead sponsor of Intro 938, 939, and 940. “Today, the Department of Buildings will have a comprehensive package of reforms to work with for better enforcement. These bills strengthen and protect tenants’ rights to stay in their homes and not be harassed by construction to their unit or building. This is key legislation for my district of Williamsburg, Bushwick and Ridgewood where these tactics run rampant, and just as valuable for families throughout the City.”

“The Stand for Tenant Safety legislative package aims to correct the behavior of the worst landlords, who will now face the threat of foreclosure if they neglect to make necessary repairs,” **said Council Member Ben Kallos, Vice Chair for Policy for the Progressive Caucus and lead sponsor of Intro 930 and 931.** “For too long some landlords and building owners have neither fixed recurring problems on their properties nor paid the fines that go along with those violations, putting tenants in unsafe conditions sometimes for years on end. Introductions 930 and 931 are written to prevent just that. Thank you to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her support and attention to the Stand for Tenant Safety legislative package.”

“I’m so inspired by the advocates who have spent years fighting to make the Stand for Tenant Safety package of reforms possible–this is their victory,” **said Progressive Caucus Vice Chair for Budget Advocacy Council Member Helen Rosenthal and lead sponsor of Intro 944.** “This legislation represents a sweeping reform to the Department of Buildings, and it will make a major impact in the lives of tenants across the city. Congratulations to the entire Stand for Tenant Safety coalition and to all my colleagues on the Council who have taken this cause up.”

“No landlord should get away with harassing low-income residents, working families and seniors on fixed incomes through illegal construction in an attempt to drive them from their homes. By requiring our City to set limits on the self-certification of buildings by landlords with a history of tormenting their tenants, our City is wielding a new tool to fight tenant harassment, construction damage, and displacement,” **said Council Member Margaret S. Chin, lead sponsor of Intro 918-A.** “I thank the Stand for Tenant Safety advocates, including Cooper Square Committee and the Stop Croman Coalition, as well as my bill co-sponsor, Council Member Menchaca, for working to see this bill through. With this legislation, tenants will soon have a first line of defense against landlord harassment through illegal construction.”

“Imagine coming home to a smashed kitchen, no toilet, missing door locks and debris throughout your apartment. Constituents in District 38 frequently require help from my office to fight landlords who displace tenants with illegal construction projects,” **said Council Member Carlos Menchaca, member of the Progressive Caucus and lead sponsor of Intro 918-A.** “In response, I am prime co-sponsoring Intro 918 with Council Member Chin, which will be passed this week along with ten other Stand for Tenant Safety items. Intro 918 will make the Department of Buildings more closely monitor landlords. It will also prevent landlords with a history of violations from self-certifying the very construction projects they’re using to displace people. New York City’s affordable housing crisis will not end without protecting tenants’ rights and holding predatory landlords accountable.”

“Far too many try to bypass, bend, and break the law in pursuit of profit,” **said Council Member Stephen Levin, member of the Progressive Caucus and lead sponsor of Intro 934.** “We cannot and will not allow unscrupulous landlords to take advantage of our community. This package of bills goes to lengths to provide tenants the protections they deserve. I’m proud to continue advancing the work of the Stand for Safety Coalition, and I look forward to real progress for New Yorkers everywhere.”

“New Yorkers have the right to live without fear of being preyed upon in their own home,” **said Council Member Mark Levine, member of the Progressive Caucus and lead sponsor of Intro 936.** “The legislation we are passing today, including two of my own bills on tenant harassment and

safety, will take the critical steps necessary to protect vulnerable tenants while also making it easier for them to take legal action against abusive landlords.”

“I’m proud to sponsor this important piece of legislation. Intro 1556 sends a message to unscrupulous landlords that the City is serious about protecting tenants and their rights. I’m also pleased to have helped shepherd both packages through the committee. Coupled with the other bills, Intro 1556 will go a long way in curbing these illegal practices and making sure those in violation of the City’s law will be penalized accordingly” **said Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, Chair of the Council’s Committee on Housing and Buildings, member of the Progressive Caucus.**

“I am proud to stand with the STS Coalition and my Council colleagues. For far too long some of the city’s worst property owners have used devious, despicable tactics, as well as construction renovations to harass and intimidate tenants. Tenants living in buildings that are undergoing substantial construction usually do not know where to turn. Therefore, the passage of the “Safe Construction Bill of Rights” legislation would require landlords to provide tenants prior notice of significant construction projects and periodic updates about the status of such construction projects. I believe this is common sense legislation and its passage will demonstrate that New York City will ensure that construction is safe with tenants in place and that tenants will be informed. The overall impact of this legislative package is that New York City will be the best and safest place to live,” **said Councilwoman Rosie Mendez, sponsor of Intro 960.**

“It is no secret that some unscrupulous building owners have used vacate orders as a tool to evict tenants from their lawful apartments,” **said Council Member Rafael Espinal, sponsor of Intro 924-A.** “My bill, which requires DOB to specify a date by which building owners must correct the violations that led to the vacate order, will ensure clarity on what is expected from building owners and hold them accountable for their actions. This, along with the entire STS package will go a long way to prevent tenant displacement and maintain safe living conditions for New Yorkers.”

“Today, the City Council and the Progressive Caucus are putting landlords on notice that tenant harassment is unacceptable in this city,” **said Council Member Donovan Richards, Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus.** “These practices aimed at displacing New Yorkers are inexcusable and put resident safety at risk, all so a landlord can raise rents. This package of legislation will ensure that landlords are held accountable and root out any property owners who don’t stand for their tenant’s safety.”

“Construction harassment is a concern that can have serious consequences for tenants across our city,” **said Council Member Debi Rose, member of the Progressive Caucus.** “As our city continues to grow and change, we need to protect our tenants, especially in light of increasing homelessness. This package of bills puts proper protections in place to help keep people from losing housing and further straining our system.”

“I am proud to support all bills in the Stand for Tenant Safety package because our city’s tenants deserve relief,” **said Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, member of the Progressive Caucus.** “Many landlords in my community do all they can to get tenants out, often pushing the legal boundaries to get their way. Today the Council is standing firmly on the side of tenants and expanding these boundaries on their behalf. Those who engage in harassment through construction, fail to make crucial repairs and employ other despicable tactics will be held accountable and may even lose their buildings. Landlords in our city have a responsibility to their hard-working tenants and we are reaffirming that today.”

“Until City Council adopted today’s landmark tenant safety bills, cracks in the existing laws often allowed unscrupulous landlords to get away with unsafe construction work practices as a form of tenant harassment. We are proud to stand with the tenants and coalition members who worked to

develop these new enforcement tools that will protect tenants whose homes literally become construction sites,” said **Bianca MacPherson, paralegal with the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center.**

The eleven bills that have passed include:

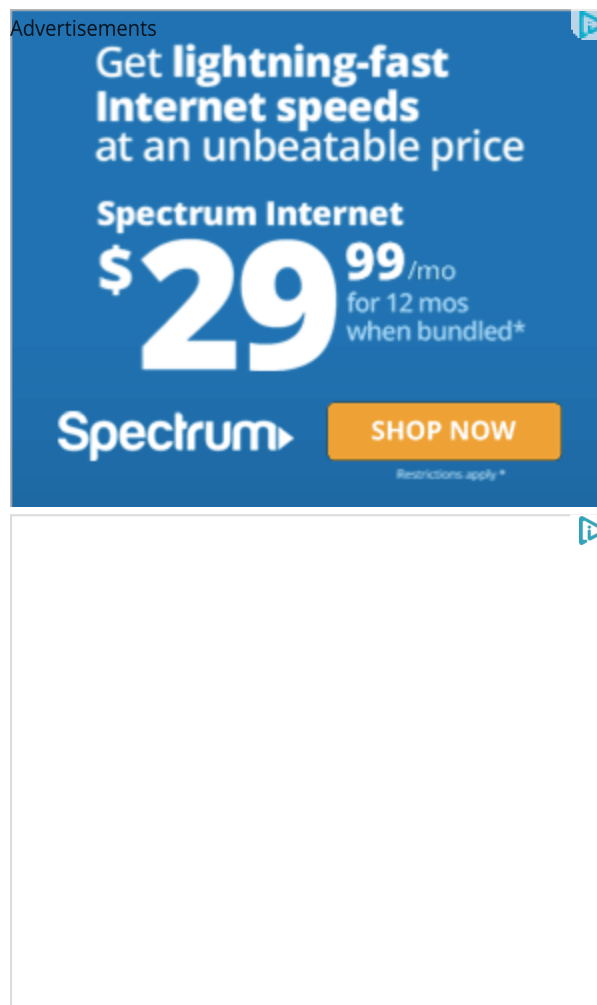
- [Professional Certification \(Intro 0918\): \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473952&GUID=D9ABA024-59E9-4C58-93D6-2E7B28EF538C&Options=ID%7CText%7CAttachments%7C&Search=Levin\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473952&GUID=D9ABA024-59E9-4C58-93D6-2E7B28EF538C&Options=ID%7CText%7CAttachments%7C&Search=Levin) This bill provides that in multiple dwellings where more than 10% of the dwelling units are occupied, or where the owner has harassed tenants, the DOB must perform full examinations of construction documents and final inspections. Co-sponsored by Council Members Margaret Chin & Carlos Menchaca, members of the Progressive Caucus.
- [Vacate Orders \(Intro 0924\): \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473893&GUID=E04AC443-193B-4EBF-85E6-AE19D928CD7F&Options=Advanced&Search=\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473893&GUID=E04AC443-193B-4EBF-85E6-AE19D928CD7F&Options=Advanced&Search=) This bill requires the DOB to include the date by which an owner must certify the correction of any and all violations along with a written vacate order. Sponsored by Council Member Rafael Espinal.
- [Construction Task Force \(Intro 0926\) \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473916&GUID=231177B0-031A-4122-8C08-21936086AE99&Options=Advanced&Search=\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473916&GUID=231177B0-031A-4122-8C08-21936086AE99&Options=Advanced&Search=): This bill creates a task force on construction work in occupied multiple dwellings. Sponsored by Council Member Daniel Garodnick.
- [ECB Liens \(Intro 0930\): \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473908&GUID=E14F6E26-C4A4-4AEC-9BC4-02E6C0F38E85&Options=ID|Text|&Search=930\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473908&GUID=E14F6E26-C4A4-4AEC-9BC4-02E6C0F38E85&Options=ID|Text|&Search=930) This bill expands the Department of Housing Preservation and Development’s Third Party Transfer program, which allows the City to foreclose and sell distressed residential buildings to pre-qualified third parties, to include buildings whose owners have incurred large amounts of unsatisfied building violations. Sponsored by Council Member Ben Kallos, Vice Chair for Policy for the Progressive Caucus.
- [Building Code Violations \(Intro 0931\) \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473891&GUID=4E0B743C-A7F7-455E-ACE1-4D6AF1AD9155&Options=ID|Text|&Search=\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473891&GUID=4E0B743C-A7F7-455E-ACE1-4D6AF1AD9155&Options=ID|Text|&Search=): This bill provides that building code violations adjudicated before Environmental Control Board would constitute tax liens on the property. Sponsored by Council Member Ben Kallos, Vice Chair for Policy for the Progressive Caucus.
- [Tenant Protection Plans \(Intro 0936\) \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473919&GUID=84A92108-3BD8-404B-9AA7-F0BC593503D2&Options=Advanced&Search=\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473919&GUID=84A92108-3BD8-404B-9AA7-F0BC593503D2&Options=Advanced&Search=): This bill amends information required in tenant protection plans (TPP) and prescribes measures to ensure compliance with the TPP. Sponsored by Council Member Mark Levine, member of the Progressive Caucus
- [Permit Oversight \(Intro 0938\) \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473888&GUID=F6728D19-9045-4100-A8CF-64C52F0546C6&Options=Advanced&Search=\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473888&GUID=F6728D19-9045-4100-A8CF-64C52F0546C6&Options=Advanced&Search=): This bill requires increased oversight of construction contractors who have engaged in work without a required permit. Sponsored by Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus.
- [Penalties for Work Without Permit \(Intro 0939\): \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473887&GUID=83C41B92-971F-4C82-972B-5AAC1E670D7A&Options=ID|Text|&Search=939\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473887&GUID=83C41B92-971F-4C82-972B-5AAC1E670D7A&Options=ID|Text|&Search=939) This bill would increase the penalties for work without a permit. Sponsored by Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus.
- [Penalties Stop Work Order \(Intro 0940\): \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473886&GUID=ACA6FF6C-B78B-464A-AAC2-10151C588332&Options=ID|Text|&Search=940\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473886&GUID=ACA6FF6C-B78B-464A-AAC2-10151C588332&Options=ID|Text|&Search=940) This bill to increases the penalties for a violation

of a stop work order. Sponsored by Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus.

- [Construction Work Permits \(Intro 0944\): \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473911&GUID=C4CDD748-8868-43AA-B033-E2C6F381993C&Options=ID|Text|&Search=944\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2473911&GUID=C4CDD748-8868-43AA-B033-E2C6F381993C&Options=ID|Text|&Search=944) This bill imposes additional penalties for performing construction work without a permit and increase oversight for buildings where such work has been performed. Sponsored by Council Member Helen Rosenthal, Vice Chair for Budget for the Progressive Caucus, and Council Member Corey Johnson, member of the Progressive Caucus.
- [Construction Bill of Rights \(Intro 0960\) \(http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2484604&GUID=F20B97BA-C68B-4832-81A0-3E75C6C9372A&Options=ID|Text|&Search=944\)](http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2484604&GUID=F20B97BA-C68B-4832-81A0-3E75C6C9372A&Options=ID|Text|&Search=944): This bill creates a safe construction bill of rights. Sponsored by Council Member Rosie Mendez.

These bills together give tenants better protection from dangerous construction and help DOB to enforce already existing laws. Without these bills, unscrupulous landlords can use loopholes in the city's enforcement to create hazardous construction conditions to push tenants out of their homes.

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