

Here's What Some Local Faith Leaders Are Saying About Notorious Landlord Steve Croman

Posted on: April 11th, 2016 at 5:10 am by Staff (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/author/staff/>)



Even community religious leaders are now coming out against Steve Croman (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/tag/steve-croman/>), one of the most hated men this side of the Hudson.

Organized by the **Cooper Square Committee** and **Movement for Justice in El Barrio**, thirty-one faith leaders from several religions attempted to deliver letters of admonishment to the notorious landlord's office (9300 Realty) at 632 Broadway last Thursday.

From the mailbag:

In their letters, the 31 faith leaders from a broad array of denominations – including Catholic priests, rabbis, Buddhists, and Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Methodist, Unitarian and Interfaith ministers – exhort Croman to “treat your tenants with dignity and respect rather than pressuring them to leave their homes.”

This landlord's underhanded tactics include threats of jacking up rents by hundreds of dollars coupled with pressure to take buyouts. Tenants who reject buyout offers have received bogus leases with illegal rent increases, a blatant attempt at removing apartments from rent stabilization. Croman is also known for baseless court actions and hazardous and toxic demolitions and renovations, tactics aimed at driving out long-term tenants. Religious leaders argue that Croman's abuses and tactics will have long-lasting effects as they “are resulting in the loss of critical rent regulated housing, which has a devastating impact on our communities by destroying the ethnic diversity and character of them.”

Croman is currently under investigation by the New York State Attorney General (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/2014/07/slumlord-steve-croman-investigation-state-attorney-general/>) for his efforts to push rent-stabilized tenants out of their homes. Despite action by the Attorney General against Croman's “tenant relocation specialist,” Anthony Falconite, well-known for harassing Croman's tenants, this individual is still operating and pressuring tenants in buildings across New York City.



Unfortunately, the letters never reached Croman. Activists tell us that the building manager called the police due to the demonstration in the lobby, and were ejected onto the sidewalk for trespassing.

"[Cooper Square Committee] thinks it's really important to go after these landlords on their turf," CSC director of organizing Brandon Kielbasa tells us. "Going to their offices, homes, etc. is something that is essential."

"These landlords need to know that the battles they will face will not be quietly kept in court rooms or relegated to conversations with elected officials. They will be out in the streets and visible for everyone to see and know."

One of said letters is published below, written by Marc Greenberg (<http://www.iahh.org>), executive director of the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing:

January 27, 2016

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Croman,

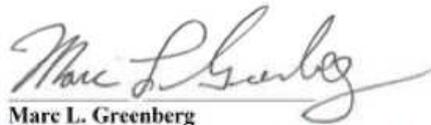
We, faith leaders from across New York City, are very concerned about what we have learned about your practices towards your tenants. As the owner of a large and thriving real estate business worth millions of dollars in New York City, the way you conduct business with tenants impacts thousands of New Yorkers. Tenants have the right to live undisturbed in their homes, just as you and your family have that right.

We ask that you, Mr. Croman, treat your tenants with dignity and respect rather than pressuring them to leave their homes.

We have read in newspapers and heard from tenants across the city about the pressure tactics that you have been known to employ including: offering buyouts alongside threats of extreme rent increases and displacement if buyouts are refused, sending an aggressive "tenant relocater" to tenants' apartments and workplaces to make threats and offer buyouts, demanding alleged back rent which has in fact been paid, among others.

As people of faith, we call on you to stop this abuse at once and treat your tenants with the respect that all people deserve. Your tactics are resulting in the loss of critical rent regulated housing, which has a devastating impact on our communities by destroying the ethnic diversity and character of them. As the owner of an estimated 185 + buildings in New York City, you have a great responsibility to thousands of tenants and we implore you to take on this responsibility and respect the rights of your tenants.

In faith,



Marc L. Greenberg
Executive Director, *Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing*

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