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D.A. Bragg and Legislators Announce Bill To Address Systemic Harassment Of Rent-Regulated Tenants



OCTOBER 30, 2025

Legislation will create new penalties for systemic harassment of rent regulated tenants and repeat offenders

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr., New York State Senator Brian Kavanagh and New York State Assemblymember Micah Lasher **announce legislation** to create new criminal penalties for the systemic harassment of rent-regulated tenants and penalize repeated, recidivist harassment.

The legislation would:

- Create a new class D felony, Aggravated Harassment of a Rent-Regulated Tenant to address systemic harassment across multiple buildings, and
- Elevate penalties for those previously convicted of Harassment of a Rent-Regulated Tenant in the First Degree.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, Jr., said: “Our city is in the midst of a housing crisis which creates power imbalances between landlords and tenants. While many landlords play by the rules, there are unscrupulous individuals who seek to exploit the lack of affordable housing for financial gain. I created the Office’s first Tenant and Housing Protection Unit to add systemic harassment and other illegal activity, and our work has shown we need additional tools to prevent and deter this conduct from occurring. This new proposed legislation will create additional measures of accountability for those who systemically harass rent regulated tenants and create a deterrent to engage in this type of conduct. We must protect every unit of affordable housing, and I thank our legislative partners for their support on this critical issue.”

Senator Brian Kavanagh, Chair of the Senate Housing Committee and sponsor of the legislation, S8559, said: “Strengthening and protecting the

rights of tenants to live in peace in their homes has been a cornerstone of work over many years now. The landmark Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 eliminated the loopholes that allowed rent regulated tenants to be legally displaced through exorbitant rent increases and deregulation. Unfortunately, some unscrupulous landlords continue to employ harassment and other illegal means as they attempt to drive tenants out of their buildings. I am proud to stand with District Attorney Alvin Bragg to provide his office and other prosecutors the criminal statutes they need to stop the harassers and bring justice for New Yorkers who are victims of this pernicious behavior. I look forward to working with Assembly Member Micah Lasher and our colleagues to enact this bill as soon as possible.” 

“For too long, our tenant protection laws have contained a critical gap.  Harassment within a single building can result in felony charges, landlords who engage in the same illegal conduct across multiple properties may only face misdemeanor penalties. We cannot allow scale to act as a shield,” said **Assemblymember Micah Lasher**. “This legislation closes that loophole by ensuring that the severity of the charge reflects the scope of the harm and protects all rent-stabilized tenants. I’m proud to sponsor this bill alongside District Attorney Bragg and Senator Kavanagh, and I look forward to seeing it become law.”

Under existing New York State Law, harassing two or more rent-regulated tenants in a single building to induce them to leave their homes is considered Harassment of a Rent-Regulated Tenant in the First Degree, a class E felony. However, when a landlord subjects rent-regulated tenants to systemic harassment across multiple properties, they face no additional penalties.

Under the bill, landlords who engage in a “systematic ongoing course of conduct” across multiple properties could be charged with the new class D felony, Aggravated Harassment of a Rent Regulated Tenant.

The new law would also allow prosecutors to charge D felony Aggravated Harassment of a Rent Regulated Tenant if the defendant has previously been convicted of E felony Harassment of a Rent Regulated Tenant in the First Degree and repeats the same behavior. This would address recidivist landlords who repeatedly engage in the same conduct by adding an additional deterrent.

Manhattan D.A.’s Housing & Tenant Protection Unit

In October 2022, District Attorney Bragg launched the Office's first-ever Housing & Tenant Protection Unit, which targets systemic criminal harassment of tenants and abuse of government programs by landlords and developers. Areas of focus are harassment of rent regulated tenants, deed fraud, and defrauding of government subsidy programs by landlords and developers. The Unit focuses on long-term investigations into systemic, structures, and organized criminal activity among landlords and developer

Tips and complaints can be submitted to the Unit's helpline at 212-335-33 or email Danyhousing@dany.nyc.gov. The Office seeks justice for every victim and witness, regardless of immigration status.



Recent prosecutions include:



- The **indictment** of a man for allegedly stealing over \$32,000 from four in by falsely representing himself as the landlord of a Midtown Manhattan luxury studio apartment between April 11, 2025, and May 28, 2025.
- The **indictment** of a landlord for allegedly harassing two older, rent regulated tenants in Chelsea between September 2020 and September 2025.
- The **indictment** of a man for allegedly stealing approximately \$25,000 from three victims through an apartment rental scam.
- The **indictment** of three individuals and three companies for allegedly working together to steal a Harlem brownstone by posing as the heir of the deceased owner of the building and committing deed fraud. The defendants allegedly acquired ownership of the building and fraudulently obtained a mortgage and construction loan to renovate the property so they could sell it for profit.

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