



Policy Brief from the Office of Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner

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Protecting tenants from fraudulent landlords

The demand for affordable housing in the Bronx and New York City has been increasing exponentially. Thirty-nine percent of available affordable housing has fallen off the market, according to Community Service Society. As a result of this increased need for affordable housing, there has been a rise in the number of individuals fraudulently representing themselves as landlords or owners to deceive prospective tenants. This has exacerbated New York's affordable housing stock and negatively impacted unsuspecting tenants.

According to the New York State Division of Consumer Protection, New York State has received 211 complaints of Realtor Agent/Landlord Fraud in 2013. Of these, 121 are from New York City. The New York State Division of Consumer Protection says complaints regarding deceitful real estate agents and apartment information vendors are concentrated in areas reported to have an increasingly high number of victims, such as locations popular with immigrants or younger residents who are new residents of New York. These victims can then be subject to legal or court actions forcing them to surrender the apartments with no legal recourse.

In the Bronx, tenants have a greater chance of being evicted than in any other borough. In 2011, there were nearly 11,000 evictions issued in Bronx Housing Court, according to a report by New Settlement Apartments' Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) and the Community Development Project (CDP) at the Urban Justice Center. In addition, the number of tenants who lose their homes in the Bronx is twice that of tenants throughout the entire city demonstrating the huge disparity of evictions within the Bronx.

Legislation:

Assembly Bill A.10701: Establishes the lease and landlord fraud public awareness program to promote public awareness of the potential risks of signing a fraudulent lease with an individual misrepresenting themselves as a landlord.

Message from Assemblywoman Joyner:

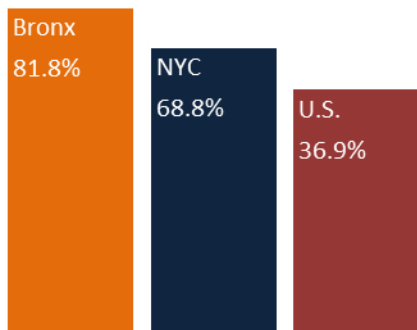
Due to the ongoing affordable housing crisis, finding and maintaining a legitimate home for a family has become increasingly difficult and bad actors posing as landlords and building owners have been exploiting these conditions. In most cases, unsuspecting tenants sign a false lease and lose their home, their rent payment, their security deposit and their dignity. By creating a public awareness campaign through the auspices of the New York State Homes and Community Renewal, all New Yorkers will be better informed about lease and landlord fraud. This program will assist individuals who could be deceived into renting a house or apartment from individuals misrepresenting themselves as landlords, and preserve a legitimate future for our families.

Number of Complaints Regarding Landlord Fraud



Source: New York State Division of

Percentage of Households Listed as Renters



Source: NYU Furman Center