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Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

Recent public reports on evictions in our city, particularly in The New York Times, highlight the continued importance of representation for tenants in housing court. My office and others were instrumental in all phases of pushing for the passage of the local legislation, Intro 214-B a.k.a. "Right to Counsel," that secured legal representation for low-income tenants in New York City's housing courts and brief legal assistance to all renters, and I was honored to stand beside you as you signed this law so many advocated for so zealously.

However, evictions continue apace despite our efforts to provide tenants with necessary counsel in housing court. I remain concerned about this problem, and about the timeline for a full citywide roll-out of the newly mandated services provided through Intro 214-B. Therefore, I am urging your administration to move this program forward expeditiously and to guarantee full implementation at least two years before the July 2022 deadline required by the law. This must be prioritized. Our City's tenants simply cannot wait. We must work harder to keep them in their homes and neighborhoods, rather than deal with a crisis when they are evicted and forced into the shelter system.

Given the expected new development that will result from rezonings in our City, it is incumbent upon your administration to show the leadership and managerial zeal to take the necessary action at a rapid rate to provide indigent tenants with representation in housing court. The administration must also adhere to its commitments on additional tenant protections and affordability.

Slow incremental progress is insufficient in this matter at this time. The needs of our city demand a full and entirely funded response well in advance of the required deadline. The time for complete sea change is now, not in 2022. Neighborhoods should not await services until the deadline. The benefits of the "Right to Counsel" legislation must be enacted at a faster pace.

I hope you will prioritize this matter crucial to the housing-stability of New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Ruben Diaz Jr.