



BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA L. GIBSON

**Statement from Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson at the
June 8, 2026 Bronx Public Hearing of the Rent Guidelines Board**

Good evening Chairperson Chantella Mitchell and Members of the New York City Rent Guidelines Board, and thank you for convening today's meeting. I appreciate the opportunity to testify here in the South Bronx regarding the proposed rent hikes that the Board is considering.

Access to safe, quality, and affordable housing is a fundamental right. The rent stabilization system is one of the cornerstones of affordable housing in our city. It has proven to be a lifeline to help working- and middle-class families remain in their homes and in their neighborhoods.

Over the past several years, our city has faced numerous challenges relating to housing and helping tenants stay in their homes. Since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen over 18,000 residential evictions in The Bronx alone, and the rate of evictions is rising. As one of the prime sponsors of our city's historic Right to Counsel legislation, I know well the devastation that families experience when they are evicted from their homes. I am highly concerned about the continuing decline in the percentage of tenants in housing court receiving legal services. Only 28% of Bronxites facing eviction in housing court had access to legal representation in the final quarter of fiscal year 2025, down from 60% in the final quarter of fiscal year 2022. I will continue to fight to ensure that the right to counsel law is strengthened and that the program is fully implemented and funded.

Additionally, we have seen an increase in residential fires across The Bronx. These fires often electrical, stemming from aging infrastructure, landlord neglect, or a lack of government accountability. This has led to hundreds of tenants being displaced across our borough, and more must be done to help them get back into their apartments or find new homes.

As the high cost of living continues to batter the finances of low- and middle-income households, we must avoid increasing the financial burden for tenants who are already struggling. These price increases are often not being offset by increased wages for Bronxites, placing thousands of tenants under increased financial stress. Half of rent-stabilized tenants are already rent burdened and do not receive any other housing subsidy.

Inflation and price increases have also increased costs for small landlords, and we must take their needs into account as well. If these landlords are unable to provide quality housing due to high costs, then an essential segment of our housing stock will be lost. In order for our city to meet its housing goals, we must create an environment where small and non-profit landlords are able to operate effectively and maintain the apartments they manage to appropriate quality standards.

However, our first priority must be to ensure our tenants are able to keep a roof over their heads. Rent-stabilized tenants in The Bronx simply cannot afford to pay exorbitant rent increases, especially when faced with higher costs on everything else.

The proposed rent hikes of between 0% and 2% for one-year leases and between 0% and 4% for two-year leases reflect a necessary balance between the rising costs on landlords and the strained ability of tenants to absorb higher rents. During this unprecedented housing crisis, our tenants deserve a City that takes their concerns seriously and enables them to stay in their homes, while also preventing property owners from having insufficient financial resources to maintain their buildings in a good state of repair.

I have heard too many stories from too many tenants about their financial struggles, the substandard quality of their housing, and the harassment that they are facing. Every one of them deserves the same access to quality and affordable housing that tenants of other boroughs are able to obtain.

After the approved increases over the past few years, additional large increases would put thousands of rent-burdened households at risk of

eviction and displacement. I urge the Rent Guidelines Board to protect vulnerable New Yorkers as you consider this proposed rent increase. As we continue to pursue strategies to tackle the housing crisis and reduce housing costs, we cannot and should not support any rent increase that will punish our tenants and have lasting consequences for our city. We must continue to strive for a city where every New Yorker has access to the quality and affordable housing that they deserve.