



(list in formation)

Independence Plaza North Tenants Association
Working Families Party
New Amsterdam Tenants Association
Heywood Towers Tenants Association
ACORN
Community Service Society
Roosevelt Island Tenants Association
SEIU 32 BJ
Phipps Plaza Tenants Association
Concerned Cooper-Gramercy Tenants Association
CWA 1180
UNITE
PEF Region 11
Met Council on Housing
New York Jobs With Justice SSEIU Local 371
Citizen Action of New York
Knickerbocker Plaza Tenants Association
Mason Tenders District Council
Northwest Bronx Community Clergy Coalition
Boulevard Towers Tenants Association
IBT 808
DC 37 AFSCME
United Jewish Organization of Williamsburg
Columbus Manor Tenants Association
Tracey Towers Tenants Association
UAW 9A

Visit www.IPNTA.org for summary of Intro 523, key testimony, and other important information

CONTACT:

Kendall Christiansen
Geto & de Milly, Inc.
212.686.4551
kchristiansen@getodemilly.com
cell: 917.359.0725

NEWS RELEASE

for
**Wednesday,
October 29**

Tenants and Allies Rally to Preserve Affordable Housing; Council Holds Hearing to Preserve Mitchell-Lama Housing

City Council Speaker Gifford Miller Addresses Rally of Mitchell-Lama Tenants

Rally called to support Council hearing on Intro 523 – bill to limit owner buy-outs and conversions to market rents of over 25,000 apartments in all five boroughs

New York: Hundreds of residents of City-supervised apartment buildings financed under the Mitchell-Lama housing development program joined **City Council Speaker Gifford Miller** at a rally today at City Hall, as the Council prepared to hold its first hearing on **Intro 523 – the Mitchell-Lama Conversion Protection Bill** – as middle-class residents of over 25,000 rental apartments are at-risk of losing their long-time homes, as owners of Mitchell-Lama properties opt to convert them to market rents.

The rally featured leaders of elected officials, tenant associations, and other concerned organizations calling on the City Council to pass Intro 523 in an effort to stop early buy-outs and conversions to escalating market prices of what remains of the City's precious Mitchell-Lama housing stock – that provides affordable homes to thousands of middle-class New Yorkers and their families, including teachers, transit workers, uniformed officers, and healthcare workers.

City Council Speaker Gifford Miller addressed the rally just before the Council held its initial hearing to consider legislation that seeks to preserve Mitchell-Lama units from being lost forever as affordable housing for middle-class New Yorkers. **An additional 35 Council Members – including Alan Gerson and Gale Brewer – are co-sponsoring Intro 523 with Speaker Miller.**

In his remarks, **Speaker Miller** said, "Since July, when I announced my sponsorship of Intro 523, thousands of tenants in two more Mitchell-Lama buildings have been served with conversion notices, and residents of another Mitchell-Lama building have been served with eviction notices. Instead of standing and watching while our City's housing crisis grows, we should be making every effort to solve it. That's why the Council will do all that it can within state and federal law to stem the loss of any more Mitchell Lama homes. Now is the time that must say clearly that enough is enough."

The Speaker further noted that, "Preserving and protecting one of our country's most successful affordable housing programs represents a vital step in that effort – an effort to ensure that low and middle income New Yorkers can work and live in this City well into the future."

Organized as the **Campaign to Preserve Affordable Housing**, more than fifteen tenants associations from Mitchell-Lama buildings across the city participated in the rally. Led by the Independence Plaza North Tenants Association, Mitchell-Lama tenants were joined by leaders of ACORN, the Working Families Party, the Community Service Society and SEIU Local 32 BJ, which represents building services workers in many Mitchell-Lama buildings.

David Jones, President of the Community Service Society, said, "The Council is taking a necessary step to help save what remains of our valuable stock of Mitchell-Lama apartments. The bill deserves support from the entire Council and then should be signed into law by the mayor."

A recent report by the **Community Service Society – "Keeping the Doors Open"** – reviews the Mitchell-Lama preservation crisis, as well as the broader challenge of preserving affordable housing subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It is available at www.cssny.org.

Diane Lapson, representing the **Independence Plaza North Tenants Association** in Tribeca – *which was served with its conversion notice in late June* – said, "On the eve of Halloween, losing one's home is really scary. Preserving New York's remaining stock of affordable rental housing must become a top priority for the Mayor and City Council. Independence Plaza helped the city to survive 9.11, and must not now have its very existence threatened by the failure of politicians to act. Thousands of Mitchell-Lama residents are demanding a solution that protects their homes and our communities from the short-sighted actions of politicians decades ago."

"Fixing the Mitchell-Lama law is as black and white as politics get," said **Working Families Party co-chair Bertha Lewis**. "Working families – the backbone of New York – have lived in these buildings for decades, transforming the communities around them. And taxpayers paid for these buildings. But a few landlords are taking advantage of a short-sighted provision in the law which allows them to unfairly profit from converting affordable housing to market-rate apartments that only the rich can afford."

Neil Fabricant, head of the Independence Plaza North Tenants Association in Tribeca, said: "We applaud Speaker Miller for stepping up to the challenge of representing the people who live in taxpayer-financed affordable housing developments that are being converted to market rates. We have to keep New York a place where it's possible to live decently, even if you're not a millionaire."

"These developments were built and sustained with public money, said **Arthur Cheliotas, President of CWA 1180**. "In the wake of a continuing housing crisis, the public has a right to keep them affordable."