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New York Is Our Home

a campaign of Housing Here and Now

*A united effort of housing justice groups,
the NYC Central Labor Council and the Working Families Party*

Collecting endorsers from November 25-December 3, 2008.

December 3, 2008

Dear New York State Senate:

As a broad-based coalition of housing groups, organized labor, and community advocates, we are writing to ask for **your leadership in repealing vacancy decontrol**. Repealing vacancy decontrol is our shared urgent priority in the upcoming legislative session.

This January, the New York State Senate will face one of its greatest historic battles: the repeal of vacancy decontrol and the preservation of New York State's rent-regulated apartments. This could be the most significant victory for middle-class, working and poor tenants in New York City and the surrounding counties in over 30 years.

Vacancy decontrol has a devastating impact on New York's affordable housing system. Through vacancy decontrol, New York City has lost at least an estimated 50,000 rent-regulated units since 2005 alone. Right now, at least another 100,000 units are estimated to be on the verge of deregulation. Over the next 10 years an additional 300,000 apartments in New York City – almost one-third of the total remaining rent-regulated stock – are likely to be lost. Rent-regulation is New York State's largest affordable-housing system, protecting more tenants than Mitchell-Lama, Section 8 or public housing. Undermining rent-regulation jeopardizes the livability of the entire city and suburban municipalities.

Tenants in the deregulated apartments are completely unprotected and can be evicted without reason, leaving them vulnerable in this deteriorating economy. As wages and employment rates fall, New Yorkers need the protections of rent regulation more than ever.

Vacancy decontrol encourages the worst of landlord abuses: tenant harassment, illegal rent increases and faked apartment improvements, all to drive up rents to hit the deregulation threshold. It drives the displacement of middle-class, working and poor New Yorkers out of the neighborhoods where we have spent our lives. The repeal of vacancy decontrol would protect hundreds of thousands of tenants against evictions, saving homes and saving lives.

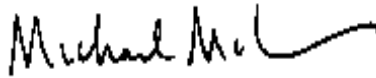
Thank you for your support on this crucial measure. **We are asking all our state legislative allies to publicly share your commitment to repealing vacancy decontrol.** Your constituents, colleagues, and the concerned public need to hear from you! Please join your State legislative colleagues in co-sponsoring upcoming legislation for full repeal of vacancy decontrol and see its success.

It has been decades since New Yorkers have had such an historic opportunity to protect our future. Thank you for leadership in defending affordable housing.

Sincerely,



Bertha Lewis, Head Organizer
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now



Michael Mckee, Treasurer,
Tenants PAC



Dan Cantor, Director
Working Families Party



Andrew Friedman, Co-Executive Director



James Mumm, Executive Director
North West Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition



Sondra Youdelman, Executive Director
Community Voices Heard



Sean Barry, Co-Director
New York City AIDS Housing Network



Maggie Russel-Ciardi, Executive Director
Tenants and Neighbors



Michelle O'Brien, Executive Director
Housing Here and Now