

1 CITY OF KINGSTON
2 RENT GUIDELINES BOARD
3 PUBLIC MEETING
4
5 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2022
6 12:10 p.m. until 4:40 p.m.
7 KINGSTON LIBRARY
8 COMMUNITY BOARD ROOM
9 SECOND FLOOR
10 55 FRANKLIN STREET
11 KINGSTON, NEW YORK 12401

12

13 BOARD MEMBERS

14 NOAH KIPPLEY-OGMAN, Chair

15 DIANA LOPEZ MARTINEZ

16 MIE INOUYE

17 ANTHONY R. TAMPONE

18 TARA P. PERRY

19 MICHAEL TIERNEY

20 CAROL SOTO

21 ARLENE PUENTES

22 MICHAEL BROWN

23

24 REPORTER: MARISA D'ANTONIO

25

1 (The meeting commenced at 12:10 p.m.)

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: This is the Kingston Rent
3 Guideline Board Public Hearing. It is November 5th, 2022, the
4 time is 12:04 p.m. And we are here at the Kingston Public
5 Library.

6 We are going to start with a brief round of
7 introductions of my colleagues here on the Kingston Rent
8 Guideline Board. I'm going to ask my colleagues to say
9 their name, their -- whether they are a public member of the
10 board, a landlord member of the board or a tenant member of
11 the board. And then we will turn to our business.

12 MR. TAMPONE: Did you I'm going to ask everybody to
13 silence their phones and a reminder about the sign up sheet?

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes. First we're going to do
15 introductions. Arlene, do you want to introduce --

16 MS. PUENTES: Arlene Puentes, I live in Kingston,
17 New York, and I am a public member.

18 MR. TAMPONE: Anthony Tampone, I also live in
19 Kingston and I am a landlord representative.

20 MR. TIERNEY: Michael Tierney, tenant
21 representative. Happy to see you all.

22 MS. INOUE: Mie Inouye, public representative.

23 MS. PERRY: Tara Perry, property owner.

24 MS. LOPEZ: Diana Lopez, public member.

25 MR. BROWN: Michael Brown, public member.

1 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm Noah Kippley-Ogman, I am
2 a public member and the Chair.

3 MS. SOTO: Carolina Soto, I am a tenant member from
4 305 Hurley Avenue.

5 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you all so much for
6 being here. We are going to a -- well, a couple of
7 requests. One, I would encourage you to silence your cell
8 phones so that we don't have interruptions and two, there
9 are sign-in sheets in the back if you would like to testify.
10 Please put your name on them and we will call on you.

11 We will start with live testimony and intersperse
12 it with I will read some testimony that has been submitted
13 to the Board's Official email address.

14 And I'd like to start by calling on Sarahana
15 Shrestha (phonetic).

16 MS. SHRESTHA: Good afternoon, everyone.

17 MR. KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm sorry. And just a
18 reminder, I will be interrupting people after three minutes
19 of speaking for individuals or five minutes if you represent
20 an organization.

21 MS. SHRESTHA: All right. Thank you. Thank you
22 City of Kingston Rent Guidelines Board for their time and
23 thank you all of the tenants who have been great and showed
24 up to make their voices heard. My name is Sarahana. I am
25 the Democratic nominee for the 103rd Assembly District,

1 which includes the City of Kingston. I'm here today to urge
2 the Rent Guidelines Board to adopt a historic rent reduction
3 when it votes to set rent adjustments as well as the longest
4 lookback period possible when it sets guidelines for fair
5 market rent appeals.

6 I've spoken to hundreds of Kingston residents over
7 the course of our campaign in the last year. We've knocked
8 on doors for over a year and almost everyone is affected by
9 rapidly rising rents, a limited housing availability, and
10 tenants being forced from their homes.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry. We can turn that
12 audio up please? Thank you.

13 MS. SHRESTHA: I have met grandparents who cannot
14 be close to their grandchildren because their children
15 cannot afford to live where they grew up. I've met parents,
16 single parents, who, in addition to making sure they have a
17 job and an income and that their child is taken care of, are
18 forced to scramble because of the whim of profiteering
19 landlords who have continued to make profit.

20 We have a housing crisis and it's rooted in the
21 fact that housing has largely become a profit-making
22 investment instead of a fundamental right that people's
23 lives depend upon.

24 Our campaign has been built on a movement of
25 working class people coming together and fighting back

1 against those who put profit over people, and that includes
2 many opportunistic landlords who have made Kingston
3 unaffordable.

4 Beyond the hundreds of conversations we've had with
5 tenants, hard data shows why a rent reduction is necessary
6 based on Zillow listings, rents in Kingston have increased
7 by up to 100 percent since 2015. And according to the Ulster
8 County Rental Housing Survey, rents have gone up in the
9 county from 2010 to 2020 by 41 percent and 39 percent for
10 one and two-bedroom apartments respectively.

11 The Kingston Rent Guidelines Board is in a position
12 to take both action to address this crisis and now is the
13 time to take bold actions. Because we are facing multiple
14 crises and a lot of people are hurting. We cannot make
15 tenants in ETPA buildings wait. Many have already been
16 priced out of their homes, and those who remain have seen
17 their rents jacked up in recent years, especially as some
18 landlords anticipated Kingston to opt in to the ETPA. It's
19 absolutely crucial the board vote to reduce rent in these
20 units and send a signal that the days of rent gouging are
21 over. That, like everything else, housing needs to be
22 democratized.

23 Additionally, the board must vote to set the
24 longest lookback period possible, when setting fair
25 market rent guidelines so that tenants can challenge

1 excessive rent increases from previous years. I urge the
2 Board to not be intimidated by bad faith lawsuits launched
3 from -- to prevent taking action. These nonsensical
4 lawsuits have failed time and time again and this one is no
5 different.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Sara.

7 MS. SHRESTHA: All right. Thank you so much.

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I really appreciate it.
9 Thank you.

10 MS. PUENTES: Sarah, question. You were speaking
11 quickly and I missed your reference. You had a reference of
12 some data.

13 MS. SHRESTHA: Yes.

14 MS. PUENTES: And I wondered if you could email it
15 to us so that we can go through that reference.

16 MS. SHRESTHA: I also included the whole written
17 transcription.

18 MR. PUENTES: Noah.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yeah?

20 MR. PUENTES: This gentleman was handing me a paper
21 and I thought he should give it to you.

22 MR. TIERNEY: I have a question for the
23 candidate for assembly.

24 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Okay.

25 MR. TIERNEY: When you're speaking to

1 voters in the City of Kingston, is housing one of the top
2 issues that you hear from?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hear you.

4 MS. SHRESTHA: I can repeat it if you want.

5 MR. TIERNEY: Yes. When talking to
6 voters, is housing one of the top of mind issues that you
7 hear about as your -- in your candidacy for assembly?

8 MS. SHRESTHA: Absolutely. So just to give
9 context, we've knocked on over \$40,000 doors in this
10 assembly district and housing is the thing that people are
11 most struggling with. And in fact, energy prices and
12 housing prices are at the root of the inflation that, you
13 know, we are experiencing right now. And I've met people
14 who had their children have to go and live with their
15 grandparents in apartment complexes that are meant for
16 seniors because they have nowhere else to go. You know, and
17 some tenants told me where are they supposed to go? Are
18 they supposed to live in a car?

19 And I also want to reiterate that, you know, we are
20 dealing with multiple crises and a stable home is the
21 beginning to true safety for everybody. If you are having
22 to worry about where you're going to live, everything else
23 becomes, you know, exponentially difficult. So if we are
24 really, truly interested in true safety, we should have we
25 must have housing security.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Shrestha.

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

3 Kathryn Layndon?

4 MS. LAYNDON: So my name is Kathryn Layndon and I'm
5 a representative for my uncle Eugene Leichtman (phonetic),
6 who's a 90-year old Korean War Veteran that lives in
7 Kingston Village, Apartment 24-M. My uncle's journey began
8 when he was living over in Lakeshore Villas, which is not
9 part of this process, but he was renting a three bedroom
10 apartment for \$1,585 back in 2019. He fell in that
11 apartment due to rugs that had huge gaps in them and rolls
12 and everything else. So he shattered his spine. We had E &
13 M Management over there at the time, who also managed Case
14 and Village -- the time and we asked for an apartment on a
15 ground floor when he came home to the hospital in rehab
16 because he was no longer going to be able to climb stairs.
17 They -- we knew of three apartments that were being
18 renovated, two be rented. We said we would even be willing
19 to go down to a two-bedroom for him, not a problem because
20 he had some children that had moved out and we were jerked
21 around and jerked around. This was in June and by October
22 we were starting to get ready for him to come home and they
23 still hadn't given us an apartment. They rented the other
24 three apartments that would have been appropriate for him to
25 other people and told us there was nothing available. So

1 they told us the only thing they could do was put us in one
2 of their other properties, which is how he ended up in
3 Kingston Village.

4 He went to Kingston Village where he went from a
5 three bedroom for \$1,585 and they turned around and they
6 charged him \$1,595 for a two-bedroom apartment. Before
7 moving into this apartment, he was promised that they would
8 put in a ramp or allow his stepson to put in a ramp because
9 he was now wheelchair down and couldn't go up and down the
10 stairs. Well, that company wasn't there for very long and
11 they -- he turned around and told him that he couldn't put
12 in the ramp. They said that he couldn't put in the ramp and
13 they weren't going to put it in either or that they had to
14 wait for approval. They had to wait for approval. So time
15 after time, his needs -- he was lied to, he didn't get what
16 he needed.

17 A new company comes in again, you know, and they
18 raised the rent to rent again. So his two-bedroom -- you
19 know, he went from a three bedroom for \$1,585 to a
20 two-bedroom for \$1,595, then after only one year, it went up
21 to \$1,637 and they also increased the garbage from \$10 to
22 \$25. And, you know, all they were supposedly doing was
23 adding this so-called butler service where they came and
24 took the garbage from your house.

25 The next company came in about six months later and

1 they ended that service and they didn't reduce the garbage
2 rates back down to \$10, they stayed at \$25 and now this is
3 the third company that he's had in the two years that he's
4 lived at this place and they still wouldn't give him the
5 ramp, they still wouldn't allow his son-in-law to build the
6 ramp.

7 What we finally ended up doing was having to go
8 through the VA and the VA had to present this -- basically
9 threaten them that they were going to put in the ramp
10 because they were denying him his accessibility rights.
11 When his rent -- his lease wasn't due to expire until
12 October 1st of this year, but yet back in May of last year,
13 they sent him a letter threatening him that if he didn't
14 sign the new lease early, his rent would not only go up to
15 \$1,712 -- \$1,789, it would be \$1,989 if he did not sign the
16 lease when they were asking him to.

17 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much, Kathryn.

18 MS. SOTO: I have a question.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: We have questions.

20 Carol?

21 MS. SOTO: Okay. How -- if given all this stuff,
22 what do you think would be a fair assessment by this Board?
23 A reduction or --

24 MS. LAYNDON: Honestly, in the same building, the
25 reason we agreed to go to Kingston Village at first was

1 because we went to -- I think it's back to Stony Run now, I
2 had friends that live there, and for a two-bedroom
3 apartment, they were paying \$900 a month, you know, six
4 months before he was looking to move in. So I think that
5 was what would be fair because, I mean, these rents, they're
6 just going up and up and up. He's on a fixed income, he's
7 got his pension, this is a man that served his country from
8 the time he was 16 years old in the Navy. He didn't retire
9 till he was 75, serving in the Navy and the Merchant Marines
10 his entire life. And this is the way that, you know,
11 they're repaying him is by company after company just
12 throwing him under the carpet and not respecting him at all.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, maybe he should make that known.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What kind of lookback would
15 that be then.

16 MR. KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm sorry. We can't.

17 MS. LAYNDON: In five years, a 30 percent
18 reduction --

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Five years.

20 MS. LAYNDON: -- in five-year lookback would be the
21 most important thing.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

23 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Just a reminder, the members
24 of the board are welcome to ask questions of the person
25 providing testimony, but we'll appreciate working to.

1 MS. LAYNDON: Basically, the audience can't ask
2 questions. Just the board.

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

4 Michael?

5 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Layndon. So you said
6 your uncle is on a fixed income, so obviously a rent
7 increase is very damaging to his ability to continue to
8 support himself; correct?

9 MS. LAYNDON: Yes, absolutely.

10 MR. TIERNEY: And what -- if you know what percentage
11 of your uncle's fixed income is spent on rent?

12 MS. LAYNDON: 50 percent.

13 MR. TIERNEY: 50 percent. Thank you.

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Are there other questions?

15 MR. TAMPONE: I'd like to ask you to document both
16 the numbers of the rent increases and the dates that they
17 were proposed and email that to Kingstonrgb@HCR.NY.gov.

18 MS. LAYNDON: Okay. I have all but the one lease
19 that they never gave him a copy of.

20 MR. TAMPONE: Yeah, if you could scan it or send
21 that in. And I'd actually like to ask that for everyone
22 that's going to submit testimony -- rent testimony and
23 documentation is really going to help us. Thank you.

24 MS. LAYNDON: Thank you so much.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Do you have a question?

1 Okay. Thank you.

2 I'm going to apologize but I struggle to read
3 handwriting, so Michael Hinchey (phonetic)?

4 MR. HINCHEY: Michael E. Hinchey.

5 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes, please.

6 MR. HINCHEY: Hi, my name is Michael. I'm a tenant
7 at 55 Cedar Street here in Kingston. I a third-party -- I
8 rent third-party from a family in Woodstock, Family of
9 Woodstock. They rent the property from the building owner
10 and they're re-renting it to me, my wife, and my daughter at
11 a subsidized price.

12 The whole idea is to hold us down, you know, until
13 we can get on RUPCO or some kind of housing or whatever. My
14 wife and I came out of homelessness. We lived in a shelter
15 in 2020. In 2021 we got up in one of the motels. When I
16 met my wife, she was pregnant from a previous relationship
17 that was abusive or whatever, but we got to Family of
18 Woodstock and they took us out of the motel and put us in a
19 two-bedroom apartment.

20 Our time is running up -- running out with them.
21 It's an 18-month program and, you know, we only got a few
22 months left, but it's to my understanding that the apartment
23 we live in, without Family of Woodstock Subsidy, it would be
24 about \$1,400. And we are currently dealing with a mold
25 situation. We actually had to go into the hospital and my

1 daughter -- they had said that we came across contact with
2 some type of mold or something like that and it's causing
3 all of us skin irritation and weight loss. And my
4 daughter's one-years-old, she don't need to be around none
5 of that, you know, mold stuff. And so I went and got a
6 doctor's note and the doctor agreed that we shouldn't be
7 around any mold, you know what I'm saying? And we're still
8 sitting there. We're still sitting there in the mold even
9 after we had documentation saying that my daughter was
10 exposed to it and what happened to her because of the
11 exposure. We're still sitting here. And this isn't
12 throwing off shade on Family of Woodstock because they're an
13 awesome organization, but the landlord makes it really hard
14 for them to help us because, like, you know, they're just
15 clashing with each other. So they're about to have to move
16 us to Ellenville. I work pavement -- I do pavement. I work
17 for Stefanos (phonetic). I'm in an offseason right now. I
18 make \$20 an hour and I work 40 hours weeks and there's no
19 way that I would be able to keep up with \$1,400 a month and
20 maintain my apartment, take care of my baby, and put food on
21 the table and stuff like that, you know. So, I mean. I'm
22 here because I don't know what else to do. I'm actually
23 here because hopefully something could come out of this, you
24 know. But Family of Woodstock's trying hard for us, but I'm
25 not even allowed to know the landlord's name, I don't know

1 his phone number, his name because he doesn't want nobody to
2 know it.

3 When I moved into the apartment, I had to take
4 rotten food out of the fridge. The carpets were all moldy
5 and they had to get pulled up after we moved in, you know,
6 because I got the doctor's note, so they had to move us in
7 at the last second. I had to take rotten food out of the
8 fridge that had been in there for months. There was trash
9 bags at the bottom of the stairs that hadn't been removed.
10 And, you know, it makes me feel like, oh, well, you know,
11 they were homeless, so they're going to be happy to be here
12 because they were on the streets before this, so it's like,
13 oh, let them clean it up, you know what I'm saying?

14 MR. KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Michael.

15 MR. TIERNEY: I have a question for Mr. Hinchey.
16 What portion of your monthly income does you spend - does
17 your family spend on housing?

18 MR. HINCHEY: Right now, currently through the
19 Family of Woodstock, the subsidy, I paid about \$250 a month.

20 MR. TIERNEY: Okay. So in total of \$1,400,
21 including your 250, there's still mold your apartment and
22 you had to clean out rotten food?

23 MR. HINCHEY: Exactly. And my daughter.

24 MR. TIERNEY: Do you think that's a sustainable
25 situation?

1 MR. HINCHEY: -- has been exposed to it and there's
2 documentation behind it and doctor's notes and we're still
3 sitting there.

4 MR. TIERNEY: And do you feel that that is a
5 sustainable situation for yourself?

6 MR. HINCHEY: There's no ventilation -- there's
7 poor ventilation. There's no code in the city for mold, so
8 whenever you ask for help, they just tell you, oh, there's
9 no code in the city for mold. You have to tell them that
10 there's a ventilation problem in order to get the mold
11 addressed. Like, you got to know how to talk to these
12 people, you know, otherwise they're going to try to run all
13 over you and do whatever they want to do.

14 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Hinchey.

15 MS. INOUE: So if you were not in the program with
16 Family of Woodstock, what proportion -- what percent of your
17 income would you be paying on rent?

18 MR. HINCHEY: Prior to Family at Woodstock, I was
19 homeless.

20 MS. INOUE: Okay.

21 MR. HINCHEY: I wasn't paying rent.

22 MS. INOUE: And what do you -- what do you want
23 the board to do -- to decide in terms of whether to do a
24 rent freeze or rent reduction, an increase?

25 MR. HINCHEY: Well, I just don't see how you're

1 going to charge \$1,400 for a two-bedroom apartment that got
2 mold in it and it's not habitable because of the ventilation
3 issue. You know, you can't take a shower or whatever
4 without the steam floating through the small apartment.
5 There's mold in the kitchen, there's mold in the bathroom,
6 and there's mold yeah, there's mold in the kitchen and in
7 the bathroom.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh my God, that's dangerous.

9 MR. HINCHEY: Yeah.

10 MS. MARTINEZ: Do you support a rent reduction?
11 And if so, how much do you think?

12 MR. HINCHEY: Absolutely. I think a 30 percent --
13 that 30 percent is a, you know, good number.

14 MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

15 MR. HINCHEY: Thank you very much.

16 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm going to read written
17 testimony submitted by Lisa Lerner (phonetic).

18 She writes, "To the members of the Kingston Rent
19 Guidelines Board, I'm the tenant in one of the rent
20 stabilized buildings in Kingston covered by the new laws. I
21 moved into my two-bedroom apartment in March 2021. The rent
22 was \$1,700. In March of 2022, the rent went up 5 percent to
23 \$1,785.

24 "I am a single mother in my 60's with a small
25 teaching business. I have no other means of support.

1 There's no other parents. In addition to paying my monthly
2 bills, I am paying for one child in college while trying to
3 fund the future time when I can no longer work.

4 "I drive a car that is 17 years old and repairs are
5 costing me around \$2,000 per year. And with current
6 inflation rates hitting all the basic needs, I'm worried
7 about money all the time. There's nothing left over for
8 anymore emergencies. It appears that the fair market rent
9 for a two-bedroom in Ulster County was around \$1,345 for
10 2022. I'm not sure if I qualify for a rent reduction, but
11 certainly another rent increase would be a hardship for me
12 and my family."

13 Janice Esposito?

14 MR. TIERNEY: When you read those testimonies, can
15 you go up to the mic?

16 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes.

17 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

18 MS. ESPOSITO: Hi, I'm Janice Esposito. I live in
19 Stony Run. I've lived there for 23 years. I used to be
20 able to call my home --

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could you speak up?

22 MS. ESPOSITO: I used to be able to call it my
23 home, I just can't that anymore. I'm here as everyone else
24 is. We'd like to see a good 30 percent reduction in the
25 rent and as soon as possible.

1 But as I've lived in four different apartments
2 there Stony and the first one I started out 23 years ago, a
3 nice 2-bedroom apartment, one and a half bath, \$882. Now
4 I'm getting in a one-bedroom that's had plenty of
5 maintenance problems and I'm paying -- just recently raised
6 \$143, and it's \$1,443 that I'm paying now along with the
7 garbage service as we all pay \$15 and our water and --
8 bills, which are so unfair.

9 We don't have individual leaders who are leading.
10 We pay what we have to pay. My rent just started as of
11 May 14th, I signed it in February and this just started
12 July 29th. So that's why a lot of us under these situations
13 would like to see it backed up to date to get credit.
14 But our maintenance problems around there in the beginning,
15 they used to call in -- I mean, the beginning of the new
16 people buying, they used to call them the best people to
17 come in and fix it but JSP and the other ones around
18 Kingston, and they seemed to stop that. But it used to get
19 fixed right away and they seemed to stop that. And now
20 they're looking for the lowest paid bidder to come in and
21 fix things. It takes the tenants so long to get something
22 fixed. And then whoever comes in to fix it, may not do it
23 properly anymore. So that needs to be taken care of also.
24 I've got plenty of pictures where they used to tape on our
25 doors notices, your rent is not paid or -- you know, I won't

1 take too much time if I would show them to everybody.
2 But the way they do things there now, it's not home. They
3 need -- somebody needs to come in and take care of this and
4 it begins with the rent. It's not worth what we were all
5 paying for.

6 And just last month I lived in building one, we had
7 a gas leak in our laundry room and found in my apartment. I
8 had mentioned this starting as of even last year, the
9 maintenance man would say, oh, well, that just smells like
10 that because when you turn the oven on or that's just from
11 the heater. It will go away. And thanks to Eric, he was
12 walking around, and he found the fire extinguishers were
13 empty and outdated. We got the fire department in there, we
14 got the fire inspector, we got Central Hudson in there,
15 they shut off the gas in my place, they shut off the gas,
16 and the hot water in the laundry room. We were without hot
17 water I think it was perhaps about four or five days.

18 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Janice.

19 Stay up there in case there are any questions.

20 MS. ESPOSITO: Yes.

21 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Esposito. How much of
22 your monthly income do you pay in rent? A percentage.

23 MS. ESPOSITO: I would say 80 percent.

24 MR. TIERNEY: 80 percent?

25 MS. ESPOSITO: Uh-huh.

1 MR. TIERNEY: And you've gotten what you would say
2 is a decrease in service?

3 MS. ESPOSITO: Yes, very much so.

4 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

5 MS. PUENTES: Are you aware that whenever you smell
6 gas, you should call Central Hutson?

7 MS. ESPOSITO: Yes. I live by myself and I guess I
8 was believing my maintenance man and I said to the office
9 about that, I said I smell gas but shouldn't our maintenance
10 team also mention something about that? I mean, I can't
11 blame it on them, you know, but --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I didn't know you had to
13 sign up first.

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yeah, there's still sign up
15 sheets if you want to testify.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

17 MS. INOUYE: You said you've been at Stony Run for
18 23 years?

19 MS. ESPOSITO: Yeah.

20 MS. INOUYE: Okay. And so would you say that your
21 rent started going up dramatically since a certain year?

22 MS. ESPOSITO: Well, I had -- I was in 25-E, at
23 that time it was \$1,225, I could not pay -- I could not live
24 in a third-story apartment because of spinal problems. So
25 when I had gotten into a lower apartment, it became \$1,500,

1 but I accepted it. I wanted to get, you know, where I
2 needed. So then I went over to building c and, of course,
3 it wasn't \$1,500 because that was a two-bedroom, now I'm in
4 a one-bedroom. It started out as 13 there and just this
5 past year it went up \$1,443.

6 MS. INOUYE: From 13?

7 MS. ESPOSITO: Yes.

8 MS. INOUYE: Okay.

9 MS. ESPOSITO: And I was just before they started
10 that amenities fee for fixed for \$65.

11 But so many of these new people moving, you know,
12 they've got to pay that \$65 extra for nothing. We have no
13 physical bedroom, we have no pool, and then I was trying to
14 tell the young lady in the offices, who's no longer there, I
15 says, well, I'm not going to be using any of these services
16 when my time comes to pay that \$65. She goes, oh, well,
17 that's not only for that but that's also for your
18 landscapers coming around and picking up the leaves. As a
19 fire hazard, now the leaves.

20 MR. KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Any other questions?

21 Thank you so much.

22 MS. ESPOSITO: Thank you.

23 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Demi Tuckley (phonetic)?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or something like that.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Or -- I'm sorry. I'm

1 struggling with handwriting. It looks like a capital D for
2 a first name and a capital T for a last name.

3 All right. If you figure out that it's you, give
4 me a holler.

5 David Burkhardt?

6 MR. BURKHARDT: My name is David -- my name is
7 David Burkhardt. I live at Stony Run, I lived there for six
8 years, the same apartment. We've been through about three
9 different owners, I believe.

10 MS. ESPOSITO: Yes.

11 MR. BURKHARDT: When I first moved in, the rent was
12 about \$1,000 a month for a two-bedroom and it just went up
13 just under \$1,700 this year. And I found it interesting
14 because the law had already been passed and it said you
15 couldn't raise rent, but they raised mine anyway and my
16 lease was about to expire and they said if I didn't sign it,
17 it was going to \$2,500.

18 I do think that the lookback period needs to be
19 long, because they need to get a decent record of pre-COVID
20 conditions, those -- I think a normal increase during
21 pre-COVID is a better factor than this weird period that
22 we've been living in.

23 They really need to -- the Board needs to make the
24 decision. Now, granted, my family lived in Dutchess, but
25 they all have had to move south because there were -- you

1 know, rents over there are just as bad. So I'm the last
2 member of my family here and if there's another -- like this
3 year, my rent increased 30 percent. And if there's another
4 such increase, I'll be leaving New York State even though I
5 have a decent job and I just can't afford to live here.

6 MS. SOTO: So, David, what would you suggest the
7 Board do about a decrease? How much of a decrease would you
8 like to see.

9 MR. BURKHARDT: I mean, I understand that
10 landlords, you know, they had cause and it's not just tenant
11 versus landlord, I mean --

12 MS. SOTO: Uh-huh.

13 MR. BURKHARDT: -- but a 30 percent increase is
14 just ridiculous. I mean, it pretty much -- I mean, I could
15 handle when it was, you know, a \$50 a month increase. That
16 was fine and I understood that prices go up, but when
17 they're like \$350 more a month over twelve months, that's
18 just -- you know, the cost of living raise that you get at
19 work, it doesn't cover that. So it's like, yeah, I got a
20 raise, but I'm worse as a whole.

21 MR. TIERNEY: I have a question, Mr. Burkhardt.
22 What percentage of your family's monthly income goes to your
23 housing cost?

24 MR. BURKHARDT: I'm pretty lucky because I chose to
25 live at an affordable place. It's about 25 percent. I use

1 that guideline when trying, but when they raised the rent, I
2 tried looking elsewhere and, like, everything was more
3 expensive. It's like they really want you to pay more than
4 25 percent.

5 MR. TIERNEY: And this 30 percent increase that you
6 got, did you notice a 30 percent increase in service from
7 the property owners?

8 MR. BURKHARDT: We have done a lot of work
9 outdoors. A lot of it doesn't pertain to me, like they put
10 in a dog park and a new playground for the kids, but I don't
11 have kids, I don't have a dog. But out of the three owners
12 that we've had since I moved in, I will say that this owner
13 has done the most work of any of the three, but they've also
14 given the most rent increases so.

15 MR. TIERNEY: So largely aesthetic improvement.

16 MR. BURKHARDT: Yes. Not indoors. I mean, the air
17 conditioner's I'm pretty sure are original to the building.
18 My electric bill triples every month.

19 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Mr. Burkhardt.

20 MS. PERRY: One other question. I'm sorry. You
21 said you lived there for about five years?

22 MR. BURKHARDT: Six.

23 MS. PERRY: Six years. And then in the
24 beginning, so pre-COVID, you lived there and your rent was
25 about \$1,000 a month when you moved in.

1 MR. BURKHARDT: Yes.

2 MS. PERRY: Do you know what the yearly increases
3 were?

4 MR. BURKHARDT: In the first couple of years it was
5 about \$50 a month, then it went to \$100, and as I said, this
6 last time was \$300 and something dollars. And that's not
7 counting the -- as other people have mentioned, they went
8 and raised the garbage fee because they added this weird
9 butler service, and then the best part is, the butler
10 service garbage can doesn't even hold a regular trash bag,
11 so I didn't get anything out of it.

12 MS. PERRY: Thank you.

13 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

14 John Clubbridge (phonetic)?

15 John, I think it starts with a C.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Say it again?

17 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Clubbridge. Clubbridge,
18 John?

19 If you don't get called because I can't read your
20 handwriting, please do try again on another signing sheet.

21 John Kane?

22 MR. KANE: Hello, I'm John. I've never done
23 anything like this before and maybe I'm not at the right
24 meeting, but I'm just going to read what I wrote. Hello, my
25 name is John King. I have lived in this county for five

1 years. My last current address was -- that we were evicted
2 from, by the way, was 438 Abeel Street here in Kingston.
3 I've worked as a gardener and a carpenter the whole time in
4 people's yards and houses. Until this year, I was able to
5 live in a one-bedroom apartment with enough left over to
6 save a tiny bit, do a little traveling, and maybe go out on
7 the weekend. In April, my wife and I learned that she was
8 pregnant. Two months after that, the building we were
9 living in was sold and two days after that we received our
10 90-day eviction notice. We contacted our local -- sorry --
11 I haven't like processed a lot of stuff. We contacted our
12 local legislature and later legal options. But, ultimately,
13 we decided that we should try to find somewhere to move
14 rather than spend her pregnancy doing battle with a hospital
15 and new landlord who is determined to turn a profit on his
16 investment as fast as possible.

17 Our old -- Airbnb is a our old apartment is an
18 Airbnb now, by the way at \$200 a night, not including fees.
19 We regret not fighting it because it's been a difficult year
20 and I'm sure plenty of folks here have experienced far
21 worse. And more recently, when we were looking for
22 apartments, the best options we could find were 400 square
23 foot studio apartments and these trended towards the \$1,200
24 a month range.

25 20 years ago when I first moved out of my folk's

1 house, my dad took me out and showed me on paper how to
2 write a monthly budget for renting an apartment. And he
3 told me -- and this has stuck with me -- he told me that
4 ideally you should be able to pay your monthly rent with 40
5 hours of work, you know, in order to be able to afford bills
6 and groceries and some date nights and save a little on top
7 of that. And this made sense 20 years ago, you know, and I
8 still think it's a decent model. But in Kingston, New York,
9 the average one-bedroom apartment nowadays is renting around
10 \$1,500 and that means to pay for a week of work, you need to
11 be making \$37.50 an hour. And here in Kingston, the minimum
12 wage is more like \$13 an hour. So if you work a minimum
13 wage here in Kingston, New York, you need to work 115 hours
14 to afford the monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment and
15 that's just the rent, no groceries, no utilities, and God
16 forbid your car breaks down or you're injured or you get
17 sick with COVID. And to me, this is a society telling you
18 to your face that you are not worthy of basic luxuries even
19 if you work over 50 hours a week directly serving people who
20 decide how much the rent is. And this is not a sign of a
21 healthy society.

22 And by the way, everyone I know in this town is
23 living under the dangling sword of eviction in rent
24 increase. My wife and I were lucky enough to have a friend
25 who was willing to rent us a small cabin in the woods. But

1 there we don't have running water, we have to haul it, we
2 split our wood, we hike our groceries in, we use an
3 outhouse, you know, and we have to drive to a friend's house
4 to use a shower. For us, you know, it's okay. We like to
5 camp, but this is not like an ideal situation or something.
6 We're doing it for a house. We're doing it because the rent
7 is outrageous. And not only that, it's extremely
8 competitive. When we've been looking for apartments, we had
9 to stop telling people we were pregnant because they
10 wouldn't even show us a unit once they found out. And I
11 heard recently that 66 percent of the units in this town are
12 short-term rentals. I don't know if that's true, but it
13 seems totally insane to me.

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Thank you.

15 MR. TIERNEY: I have a question for Mr. King.
16 Thank you so much for your testimony. So what you're saying
17 is that you had to leave our community because of your
18 housing situation -- because you were evicted?

19 MR. KANE: Yes.

20 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Any other questions?

22 MS. SOTO: Yes. Do you support a rent -- a
23 reduction?

24 MR. KANE: I actually support rent reduction as far
25 down as a rent reduction can -- should go. And I think it

1 should be notified in the law that one-bedroom apartment
2 should never cost more than 40 hours of minimum wage.

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Okay. Thank you so much.
4 Emily Theobald (phonetic).

5 MS. THEOBALD: Hi, my name is Emily. I currently
6 live in Glenford after being evicted from the New Ulster
7 Marina in Kingston back in July. I moved to Kingston in
8 June of 2016. My housing -- and I've been renting for the
9 last 13 years. My housing has always been renting. I'm
10 from Long Island originally but I moved here from Brooklyn
11 looking for cheaper rent and community. To my surprise, I
12 was able to find an apartment on Craigslist where I was able
13 to afford to live alone for my first time, an 800 square
14 foot, one-bedroom apartment on Henry and Pine for \$850 a
15 month. In fact, my new landlords lowered my rent by \$50
16 when they found out it was just me and my cat, which is a
17 far cry from the tenant-landlord relationship that seems to
18 be commonplace six and a half years later.

19 I won't reiterate our whole eviction saga as my husband so
20 eloquently and passionately told you all, but being evicted
21 for anyone is a traumatic experience, let alone being two
22 months pregnant in your first pregnancy. A time that should
23 be happy and exciting was now overshadowed by our new
24 landlord making it quite clear that he did not care about
25 us.

1 I even went as far as to have a very real and
2 honest conversation with him where I basically pleaded for
3 him to let us stay until the Spring so we could have our
4 baby, get on our feet, and then we would be out of his hair.
5 That was after we made him aware of the good cause eviction
6 law in which he said to my face things like I intend to
7 move in and work on the place and I'm a man of my word. A
8 month later, it's an Airbnb and he didn't even replace a
9 crappy stove that you can't even boil water on. So for \$200
10 a night you can rent a stove with quirks.

11 In a time where we should be nesting and preparing
12 for a baby, we were faced with having to find new housing in
13 a town we knew it would be hard in. At the marina, our rent
14 was \$1,150 a month for a one-bedroom. But the rental market
15 now is extremely limited, and everything is at least \$500 a
16 month more even with less space. In all cases, we would
17 have to be settling for less.

18 We're in a mid-30s with a baby on the way and we
19 shouldn't have to settle for a crappy apartment and a roll
20 of the dice of who our landlord is as a person. We should
21 be able to have the best housing possible for our family.
22 In the end, we had to move out of Kingston and we were very
23 grateful for our friend who is renting us a place for
24 extremely affordable rent. But, like my husband said, it
25 lacks most modern luxuries that people are used to and we

1 work hard for it. We don't get a chance to relax. We have
2 to keep surviving, which is how it feels to live around here
3 these days. And we've hardly had time to process what has
4 happened to us.

5 I was forced out of a town that I loved by a greedy
6 person who bought the property that even if he was going to
7 rent it to someone else, would definitely increase the rent.
8 And I know this is a shared experience that is happening to
9 many folks. Many people I know were born and raised here
10 and can't afford to be here any longer. And I'm demanding a
11 rent reduction and the longest lookback period possible
12 to make sure that this amazing community does not get pushed
13 out because of all this that this isn't even a desirable
14 town to be in and we need to keep it that way for everyone.

15 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much, Emily.

16 Tyler Vanderhaag? Tyler?

17 MR. VANDERHAAG: Hello. My name is Tyler
18 Vanderhaag. I live at 72 Wall Street in Kingston. I'm also
19 an organizer with Citizen Action of New York. I've been
20 around and -- knocking on doors and talking to tenants in
21 almost every single ETPA covered building since July when
22 Kingston first started considering this. The number one
23 thing me and my members hear when we're knocking on doors is
24 that the rent stabilization is too little, too late. That
25 rent is already too high for them. They cannot afford

1 another increase, let alone -- even what they're paying, let
2 alone another increase.

3 This 30 percent rent reduction that tenants here
4 have been asking for today would be a one-time, much needed,
5 desperately needed market adjustment to the years and years
6 of price gouging that's been happening in Kingston that
7 everyone here has so eloquently talked about.

8 We're losing people of our city. They're having to
9 sleep on the streets or just move with -- to move outside of
10 our county, let alone our city. That's not right. We need
11 to be doing more to protect them and this is a historic
12 first step that we could do to help them. As long with the
13 30 percent rent increase having as long as possible lookback
14 period to help restore some of those increases that have
15 been happening over the last years is just beyond needed and
16 deserved for the people of Kingston.

17 Housing is a human right here. We should be making
18 that more of an effort to protect them instead of trying to
19 get developers more money in their pocket. Being housing
20 insecure or rent-burdened affects all aspects of somebody's
21 life, from their mental health, to their job performance, to
22 their kid's education, to their safety in general, and
23 everything else. Doing this is not only a chance to put
24 money back in people's pockets, but to give them a better
25 shot at life, keeping money in their pockets, all of that.

1 So I urge you to do all you can to help these people -- or
2 help the tenants and help the people of Kingston.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Tyler.

5 Eli King?

6 MR. KANE: Can everybody hear me?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, we can.

8 MR. KANE: Okay. My name's Eli King. I'm from the
9 Mid-Hudson Valley DSA. I spoke last time. I'm going to
10 keep this brief. The housing situation in Hudson Valley is
11 inhumane. We've heard about tenants at 1058 Fair Street
12 getting evicted with those eviction orders being upheld by
13 the judges that don't know the law. We've heard about
14 tenants today talking about the conditions. Kingston's not
15 are affordable. People can't afford to live here, can't.
16 You can't afford to move a couple of towns over. There is
17 nothing.

18 We live in a fundamentally unjust society. It is
19 not just Kingston, it is not just housing, and ETPA is not
20 enough. But you have clear legal authority over this one
21 thing and you have a moral obligation to your neighbors and
22 your community who do everything they can to (inaudible)
23 with the longest possible lookback.

24 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Joan Corbin?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's Cordon (phonetic).

1 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Cordon. Joan Cordon?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Joan from my building, Joan?

3 MS. CORDON: My name is Joan Cordon. I went to --
4 it's going to go on two years now. When I first moved in,
5 they promised me all renovations, and everything would be
6 updated. Nothing has been updated. My bathrooms and the
7 sinks are all backing up. It took them over three, four
8 months to come in and fix them and wash my dishes in the tub
9 in the bathroom. They also sent me a notice saying that if
10 I do -- my lease has not been up until March of '23, they
11 sent me a notice saying that if I do renew the lease within
12 a month or so, then they were going to increase it to
13 \$1,700. And then it also said if I don't renew it -- let
14 them know by a month, then they were going to increase it by
15 October to \$2,200.

16 I am on a fixed income. I can't afford it. The
17 bottom line is, I'm going to have to move out. I can't
18 afford this kind of rent. And I just -- I've been under
19 three different owners since I moved in and not one of them
20 has ever lived up to what they were saying. The apartment
21 was filthy when I moved in. I'm just going to say that I
22 have never -- and I'm from New York City, and I had
23 apartments that were better than that -- that I'm living in
24 now.

25 I've been here for about 40 years, when my children

1 were young and I lived in the Katrina Apartments, they were
2 excellent apartments. I have to say they were very good.
3 Management was good. And I have to say the management here
4 is very poor. Maintenance is good but the management is
5 terrible. They just shush you to death and then they get
6 you out of the office.

7 My first three months there, I paid by money order,
8 I thought that was the best way to pay and then the guy
9 said, no, you should be paying by your check. I said, okay,
10 I'll pay by check. Three months, they lost my checks and
11 then they had the nerve to charge me a late fee and send me
12 a notice that I was going to be evicted from the apartment
13 if I didn't pay my rent. I tried to tell them I did pay it.
14 I had the, you know, rent (inaudible).

15 Now, I just went in and I ask now for a receipt.
16 Now they're telling me, no, I'm not going to sign it. They
17 refuse to sign it so all I know is that, I don't know what
18 they did with the checks but I had to pay it and I had to
19 pay the late fee or otherwise it's just going to be
20 compounded I guess. I don't know.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you. Thank you so
22 much. I think there's some question.

23 MS. PUENTES: Joan, there are some questions.

24 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Cordon. If -- would
25 you support the Board's actions for a rent reduction? Would

1 that make your situation at Stony Run a little more livable?

2 MS. CORDON: Oh, definitely. Yes.

3 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

4 MS. CORDON: Thank you.

5 MS. PUENTES: And, Joan, it's just for the record.

6 You have a one-bedroom apartment that was supposed to be
7 completely renovated?

8 MS. CORDON: Yes. When I first moved in, they said
9 it was only going to be like \$1,200 completely renovated.
10 When I moved in, it wasn't and then they told me it was
11 \$1,400 if I moved in and I said, that's not what you told
12 us. I never would have moved in if it was \$1,400 because I
13 just lost my husband and my daughter committed suicide, so I
14 had a lot to deal with and then they told me \$1,400. So I
15 agreed to it because I knew I couldn't make it, but then,
16 like, shopping-wise, food and stuff I can't afford it. I'm
17 very lucky I have a church community that has been helping
18 me with food and stuff. But no, it hasn't been -- I just --

19 MS. PUENTES: Thank you. Thank you very much.

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

21 Pat Pellicano (phonetic)?

22 MR. PELLICANO: I won't take a long time. I don't
23 live in one of those apartments that are going to be helped
24 by these changes. But you know I would like to see the
25 longest lookback, I guess for all of you all. But, you

1 know, to everyone else's point here, I don't know why a 30
2 percent reduction why that number makes any sense. I like,
3 you know, what Johnny was saying in terms of let's go as far
4 as possible. You know, this is like a moment of imagining a
5 better way of living, because clearly having to fight this
6 horrific tide of profiteering off of the human right, is
7 clearly not sustainable for any age group.

8 You know, even like young people who, like, you
9 know, have the ability to like, I don't know, do jobs that
10 are shittier and hurt more, like, those don't pay enough to
11 live. And, yeah, we have our elderly community who are
12 relying on the state like a fixed income. And when people
13 are not doing work and there's mold everywhere -- there's
14 mold everywhere, we all know that; right? And it's like --
15 so this is a bare minimum. So I would just maybe, you know,
16 invite you to look even deeper. We can lead on this.
17 Every community in this country is totally screwed in terms
18 of housing. And so Kingston has a chance to try and get
19 there.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Gavi and Jack
22 Bechdel (phonetic)?

23 MS. PUENTES: Afterwards, do you want me to read
24 all the letters?

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I would love that.

1 MS. PUENTES: Okay.

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Into the microphone.

3 MS. PUENTES: Sure. Whatever you think.

4 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: You may begin. Yeah.

5 MR. BECHDEL: My name is Jack Bechdel and I live in
6 Dutch Village. And I thought I heard some chuckles. Dutch
7 Village.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Like almost touching it.
9 That's good.

10 MR. BECHDEL: I'll make it brief because Dutch Village
11 has gone downhill. We've been here since 2019. We moved
12 in, in 2019. The rent was \$1,500. Now the rent is almost
13 17 -- almost \$1,800. So the ability for us -- we're both
14 retired -- to afford that is very small. And matter of
15 fact, we can't afford -- they're going for \$2,000 on
16 average. So we have an apartment that wasn't renovated. It
17 was promised and that's about it. I can't think of anything
18 else. My story is not as bad as someone else's, but it's
19 bad.

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

21 MR. BECHDEL: All right.

22 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Are there any -- sir, Diana
23 has a question for you.

24 MR. BECHDEL: All right.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: And you could return to the

1 microphone so the folks can hear your answers.

2 MS. MARTINEZ: Do you support a rent reduction.

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes.

4 MS. MARTINEZ: And if so, what percent do you
5 think?

6 MR. BECHDEL: Well, it's hard to say. We were at
7 \$1,500, I don't know what the percentage is of that -- the
8 increase is but it's got to be 15 percent at least. So it's
9 touch and go really. We may not be able to stay there.

10 Oh, one thing I wanted to point out is we think
11 that the landlords who the apartments -- the complex has
12 been flipped a couple of times at least, have New York money
13 coming up here buying up property, they bought Suss Village,
14 they promised renovation, but didn't do them, and that's
15 about all I could say. Okay.

16 MS. MARTINEZ: Okay. Thank you.

17 MS. PUENTES: This is a letter that came to the
18 Rent Guideline Board's email address on October 30th, 2022.

19 "Dear Kingston RGB,

20 "I am an economist and director of the Graduate
21 Program in Sustainability at Bard College. I am the author
22 of a widely used college textbook titled Economics and the
23 Environment. I have also researched and written on the
24 dynamics of urban housing markets. I am writing in support
25 of a modest rent reduction that has been proposed for

1 Kingston tenants.

2 “To be clear, I am offering this assessment as an
3 individual, not as a representative of Bard College. The
4 reason to support the reduction is straightforward.
5 Moderate and low income Kingston residents are being
6 squeezed by inflation generally and very rapid increases in
7 rental housing costs. As you know, between 2015 and 2020,
8 rents rose on the order of 30 percent, and in some cases
9 more than that. This has created an affordability crisis.
10 The rent reduction will provide much needed relief to
11 moderate and low income Kingston residents.

12 “Any negative effects of the policy on the rental
13 property market are likely to be small for two reasons.
14 First, with the rapid increase in rent, most landlords have
15 confirmed large windfall profits for several years. An
16 reduction would be a rollback to, say, 2019 rental rates, a
17 time on landlords were doing quite well, having profited
18 from the run up between 2015 and 2020. Thus, even with the
19 reduction, most landlords will largely still be earning a
20 good rate of return on their investment. This will be true
21 even though landlords are facing inflation for labor,
22 utilities, taxes and other variable costs. These
23 operational costs total are significantly less than a
24 monthly rent that landlords receive.

25 “Second, the restrictions of the rollback to

1 multi-dwelling units built before 1974 will also reduce any
2 negative effects, as landlords will have few alternative
3 options. These are not units that could easily -- that
4 could easily be converted to Airbnb's or sold for condos,
5 two potentially negative impacts on rental housing markets
6 when rent controls are imposed or tightened.

7 "To conclude, given the dramatic increase in rents
8 in recent years and the restricted housing stock to which
9 the proposed reduction will apply, there are not likely to
10 be significant negative effects on the rental housing market
11 from a modest reduction in rents. On the flip side, there
12 will be a large positive benefit for Kingston residents
13 hoping to keep at least this portion of the housing stock
14 affordable."

15 This is from Dr. Eban Goodstein (phonetic).

16 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you very much.

17 Okay. And if you could do another after the next
18 speaker.

19 Ann Marie Curry?

20 Brenda Miller?

21 MS. MILLER: Okay. Can you hear me?

22 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes.

23 MS. MILLER: Okay. My name is Brenda Miller.

24 MS. MARTINEZ: A little louder.

25 MS. MILLER: My name is Brenda Miller. I live at

1 Waterfront at the Strand, which it's called now. It used to
2 be called Kingston Waterfront and God knows what it was
3 called before. I've been here since December 2019 and I've
4 had three different landlords in three years I've been here.
5 And it's across the street from the Hudson River Maritime
6 Museum, so you know where it is, which is in facing Rondout
7 Creek. And one thing to add that I don't have written down
8 is that apparently my buildings are not covered because
9 we're in Lawndale, not in Kingston except that my address
10 the post office address is Kingston and my Zip code is
11 Kingston. So I don't know why we're not covered.

12 But anyway, I moved to Kingston in December 2019. I found
13 my two-bedroom apartment on Zillow and signed my first lease
14 that began December 15, 2019 and ran through December 14,
15 2020. The rent was \$1,170 per month. I was billed
16 separately by Central Hudson for cooking, gas, heating gas
17 and a gas water heater, and electricity, which includes
18 common areas that are metered. And so I'm billed by them
19 and whatever that you know is about.

20 The landlord billed and charged me for water and
21 sewer separately which was -- and it's not metered. They
22 just came up with an amount of money for sewer and water.

23 So I have no idea what -- how much I use and,
24 again, it's separately. And I also had a \$10 charge for
25 garbage removal, which eventually became \$25 for gourmet

1 garbage removal. You know, and somebody said about his
2 garbage can. I never would take it in my house because why
3 would I take their garbage can into a very tiny -- I mean,
4 it's really a small apartment to put garbage in it and then
5 have to put it outside for them to pick it up. I mean, they
6 only picked it up a couple of times a week, and I could just
7 as easily bring it back -- you know, to the dumpster, which
8 I had been doing before for \$10 a month.

9 Okay. And so they also made me pay because I don't
10 have a -- I'm kind of older, so they insisted that I give --
11 I pay them a whole year's rent, you know, ahead of time
12 which I did. So, anyway, that was my first lease.

13 My second lease which started December 15th, 2020 through
14 December 14th, 2021, my rent was increased to \$1,240 a month
15 at a six percent increase and we're still paying all this
16 other stuff. So that was an increase of \$70 a month.

17 My next lease is, which I have now, is running from
18 December 15th, 2021, through December 14th, 2022. An
19 increase to 9.5 percent \$124 a month. But when the lease
20 that I was offered, which will start December 15th, 2022, it
21 hasn't -- they didn't issue it to me, they asked me for a
22 21.5 percent increase on -- raising it to \$1,644 a month,
23 which is an Increase of \$284 a month.

24 Now, what's interesting is they sent me a letter,
25 which is kind of a threatening letter saying if I didn't

1 sign the lease immediately for this amount of money, then I
2 was going to have to pay -- and if I wanted to say I'd have
3 to pay, I don't know, \$2,500 a month. They also asked me
4 how old I was. They wanted my birth date, which I think
5 that immediately you know snaps of discrimination.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Brenda. That's
7 your three minutes. But colleagues may have a questions.

8 MR. TIERNEY: I'm sorry. Can you state your
9 address, please?

10 MS. MILLER: My address 18 Hudson Valley Lane?

11 MR. TIERNEY: Okay. You do live in the City of
12 Kingston and I would speak with Bartek behind
13 you in the pink shirt to see if you're in one of those
14 covered units. You're a city resident.

15 MR. MILLER: Yes.

16 MR. TIERNEY: What percentage of your income do you
17 pay to -- in your housing cost?

18 MS. MILLER: Well, I would say about 120 percent,
19 Michael.

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: And so that means to me, that
21 means that you're in an unaffordable and unsustainable
22 situation.

23 MS. MILLER: Yes.

24 MR. TIERNEY: Would you prefer if this Board raise
25 the rent, froze the rent, or decrease the rent?

1 MS. MILLER: I would like to see it decreased.
2 What I really would like to see are some limits on how much
3 a landlord can increase your rent and what our landlord's
4 going to pay for. This landlord does not pay for my sewer,
5 water, or heating bills. And those are the big ones. Or
6 electricity. I mean, I pay for everything, including for
7 communal costs of like -- they're in a small vestibule, you
8 know, where I enter my apartment and the lights -- the
9 exterior lights are hooked up to my next door neighbor or
10 me. You know, and they -- so they're not, you know, paying
11 for anything but the shell of the place that they offer.
12 And as far as repairs, you know, they may send someone who
13 may be competent to make repairs, but they don't really make
14 repairs, you know, they do little -- like they jiggle the
15 toilet. You know, I can do that.

16 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Miller. And if you
17 didn't get through all of your statements, I would ask that
18 you send it to us electronically.

19 MS. MILLER: I will.

20 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

21 MR. TAMPONE: I mean, I really appreciate your
22 testimony. I just want to just help you and everyone here
23 just understand, the purview of this Board is covered under
24 buildings that are six or more units and built before 1974.
25 That's the reason -- well, that building wasn't built before

1 1974 and that's the reason why it's not covered under
2 this -- under the purview of the Board.

3 But a couple of other things. If you do have a
4 shared -- you're paying your meter and somebody else -- and
5 it's in someone else's apartment, that's a shared meter
6 situation. Call Central Hudson and they'll come out and fix
7 it and make sure that the landlord takes care of it.
8 Also, it is against the law in the State of New York to pay
9 more than one-month's rent to a landlord. A landlord cannot
10 legally accept more than one-month's rent. So if your
11 landlord asks you to pay for a whole year, don't do that.
12 You don't have to do that.

13 MS. MILLER: But I did it.

14 MR. TAMPONE: Yeah, I'm just letting you know what
15 the rules are.

16 MS. MILLER: When you're out there and they're
17 sticking a lease in your face.

18 MR. TAMPONE: I agree. The owners of your property
19 are also the same owners of the Kingston Village, which
20 is -- everyone here is hearing these -- it's very clear, I
21 think, to this Board and probably everyone in this room
22 where the bad apples lie.

23 MS. MILLER: Do you know what year my place was
24 built?

25 MR. TAMPONE: I don't know, but I bet it was one of

1 the ones we checked, and that's -- right, Barb, that wasn't
2 on the list? It was built after 1974, so it doesn't fall
3 under this.

4 MR. TIERNEY: Your landlord also can't ask your
5 age. That's against the Fair Housing Act.

6 MR. TAMPONE: Yeah. But we do have other laws that
7 can help you.

8 MS. MARTINEZ: There's a five percent limit on what
9 they can raise your rent to. Yes, there is.

10 MR. TIERNEY: Yeah.

11 MS. MILLER: Okay. So by doubling, asking for a 30
12 percent reduction because -- I'm sorry. I am asking for a
13 30 percent reduction because clearly I was --

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: One more question.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: I just want to ask, what's the
16 management company?

17 MS. MILLER: Now it's Lincoln something.

18 MS. MARTINEZ: Yeah, we know them.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

20 Arlene is graciously going to read out another set of --

21 MS. PUENTES: This email was from Janice Esposito.

22 MS. MARTINEZ: She already testified.

23 MS. PUENTES: -- of 305 Hurley Ave. Apartment 1C.
24 And she didn't send words. She sent her lease. So we have
25 here in April 2021 at \$1,300 and in July 2022 \$1,515. So

1 she sent the lease.

2 Do you have another one?

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I think there's two different
4 sets of leases in there.

5 MS. PUENTES: Yeah, that's it.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Okay.

7 MS. PUENTES: So do you have any other emails?

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yeah.

9 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you for sending that, Janice.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

11 MS. PUENTES: This is an email again received to
12 the Rent Guidelines Board on November 5th, 2022 -- that's
13 today, isn't it? Okay. This is from Community Service
14 Society.

15 "Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony
16 at this historic procession of the Kingston Rent Guidelines
17 Board. We applaud the legislature of Kingston for opting
18 into New York State's rent stabilization system in order to
19 address the crisis of rising rents and gentrification in
20 this city. We thank the members of the newly formed Rent
21 Guidelines Board for dedicating their time to the support
22 and process.

23 "Our names are Oksanan Mironova (phonetic) and
24 Samuel Stein and we are housing policy researchers at the
25 Community Service Society of New York CSS. CSS is an

1 independent, nonprofit organization that addresses some of
2 the most urgent problems facing low income New Yorkers,
3 including the effects of the city's chronic housing crises.

4 "We have testified at the New York City Rent
5 Guidelines Board every year for decades providing
6 data-driven evidence of changing dynamics of New York City's
7 housing market. The NYC RGB has used CSS's research
8 findings to better understand the New York City housing
9 landscape and to deliberate about rent adjustments.

10 "Kingston's rental housing emergency is
11 particularly severe. Whereas the state defines a housing
12 emergency having vacancy rate below five percent and New
13 York City's vacancy rate was recently to be -- found to be
14 4.5 percent. Kingston's vacancy rent as of June 2022 was a
15 staggeringly low 1.75 percent.

16 "This vacancy rate appears to be worsening since
17 the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The vacancy
18 rent was at already shockingly low 1.8 -- one percent.
19 Under these conditions, individual tenants have virtually no
20 market power. If their rent is too high or if they're
21 living housing -- or if their housing is not well-maintained
22 or dangerous, they cannot simply move and force their
23 landlords to either find a tenant who will pay their desired
24 rent or to lower it to a more reasonable price. This
25 creates a severe imbalance within the housing market where

1 landlords are able to -- inflate rents leaving tenants with
2 little option to either pay unreasonably high rents or to
3 face eviction and homelessness.

4 "Under these conditions, median rents for
5 one-bedroom apartments in Kingston have jumped by 27 percent
6 between 2016 and 2020, while the rents for two-bedroom
7 apartments skyrocketed by nearly 50 percent. The majority
8 of the Kingston's -- of the cities residents are renters and
9 a majority of renters are rent-burdened or pay more than 30
10 percent of their income in rent.

11 "And an end-to-pandemic era anti-eviction measures
12 paired with rental market hostel to tenants means that
13 evictions are once again picking up in the city. In 2019,
14 the city saw roughly 350 eviction filings. The filings
15 declined in 2020 and 2021, but are nearing pre-pandemic
16 levels today with nearly 300 filings to date.

17 "While each eviction filing will not lead to an
18 eviction, some tenants will undoubtedly be forced into worse
19 living situations including homelessness. New York State
20 rent stabilization system was set up to mitigate rapid rent
21 inflation caused by power imbalances within the housing
22 market created by extremely low vacancy rates.

23 "Kingston's decision to opt into rent stabilization
24 is Kingston RGB power to address the cities ongoing market
25 failure that is causing rents to skyrocket, setting the

1 parameters for rent adjustments in 1,200 of the city's
2 units.

3 "The Board should heed the call of tenants and
4 implement a rent reduction as its final -- as its first
5 adjustment. Such a bold action would act as a market
6 correction, mitigating the impact of multiple years of
7 unjustified rent inflation. It would go a long way towards
8 preventing eviction and homelessness in Kingston and would
9 turn back the time after years of renter hardship and
10 landlord profit.

11 "Thank you for your time and consideration and for
12 taking this historic step towards housing justice in
13 Kingston."

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Arlene.

15 Rich Lanzarone (phonetic), you're representing an
16 organization.

17 MR. LANZARONE: Thank you. My name is Rich
18 Lanzarone. I'm the Executive Director of the Hudson Valley
19 Property Owners' Association. I need to start out by saying
20 that this Board is not legally appointed or legally powered
21 to do anything.

22 I will tell you something about myself. I was a
23 renter for 23 years. There were months when I could not
24 make the rent. Other months of only partial rent. In the
25 middle of that period I became sick, couldn't work, lost my

1 apartment, my family became homeless, my wife and child went
2 into a shelter. I literally -- I couldn't get into the
3 shelter. I lived on the streets of New York City for three
4 years.

5 By the grace of God, I regained my health, got a
6 job, rebuilt my credit, scraped and saved for a down
7 payment, and bought our family home. No one needed to tell
8 me about how tough their housing situation is. I personally
9 lived it. When I hear tenants talk about how their landlord
10 is terrible because the central air conditioning will slowly
11 get fixed, I want to puke.

12 By the way, the two ladies from 58th Fair Street
13 who complained at the last hearing that they were being
14 evicted, they forgot to mention that they haven't paid their
15 rent for five months. That's why they're being evicted,
16 non-payment.

17 I am a Democrat. And I fully recognize that
18 housing problems are a Blue State problem. This is New
19 York, California, Washington DC, Massachusetts problems.
20 The perceived housing shortage is a result of overly
21 burdensome regulation making it really impossible to build
22 and now the solution to the result of too much regulation is
23 more regulation. It will strengthen the availability of
24 apartments.

25 Since the new law was passed in 2019, 60,000

1 apartments have disappeared in New York City. That is the
2 HCR's own estimate. When there is a need for more housing
3 in Houston, Texas it just gets built. Think about here, 100
4 apartments keeps -- it's taking four years, it's not built.

5 I want to talk about -- I want to talk about the
6 job of the Rent Guidelines Board. It is primarily to ensure
7 that adjustments in rent correspond to changes in cost. It
8 is not provide affordable rents. There's a lot of
9 misinformation that's been going around as to what they're
10 actually in power to do. I have distributed the information
11 obtained today through the United States Bureau of Labor
12 Statistics versus the official US data on inflation or in
13 other words, the changes in cost in one year from September
14 2021 until September 2022.

15 I'll just read some in part. Fuel oil jumped
16 58.1 percent, electricity jumped 15.5 percent. Natural gas,
17 33.1 percent. These aren't increases in cost that most
18 effect landlords.

19 Okay. Thank you. If you heard me speak. Thank
20 you. Any consideration in adjustments in rents, legally to
21 be based on official data of changes and costs. You will
22 notice that nothing went down. And the very cost that
23 impact landlords are those items that have increased the
24 most.

25 I want to remind you -- excuse me, sir. I would

1 like to remind you that any decision that would be contrary
2 to the documented official authoritative government
3 pronouncement of actionable changes and costs would be -- to
4 use a legal phrase -- arbitrary and capricious. I would
5 also like to mention -- I'd like to talk about rollbacks. I
6 would ask the Board --

7 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm sorry. Whenever we're
8 interrupting him, I'm increasing the length of time that he
9 has of commentary. So I would appreciate if we could be
10 respectful. Thank you.

11 You may continue.

12 MR. LANZARONE: Thank you.

13 I would like would like to mention that any talk
14 about rollbacks, I would ask the Board to ask the attorney
15 from DHCR about the recent case Regina Metropolitan, which
16 you should be aware of which involves DHCR trying to apply
17 rent regulations retroactively. It didn't work out too well
18 for DHCR. I use the phrase highly regulated in my last
19 appearance. This is a New York City RGB phase in which
20 would include any burden with any percent of more regulated
21 apartments. Such buildings are on financial lodge for
22 solvency in New York City. So when they set the increase --
23 now, you have to understand, in New York City a building has
24 a mix of rate, target rate and regulated apartments -- so
25 when the RGB in New York City sets an increase of 3.5

1 percent, they know that market rate tenants will be
2 overpaying and subsidizing the stabilized tenants. In
3 Kingston, immediately world subject buildings would be 100
4 percent stabilized which brings me to the other
5 responsibility of this Board, which is to make sure that the
6 housing stock remains financially viable.

7 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Rich.

8 Does the Board have any questions?

9 MR. TIERNEY: I have a question for Mr. Lanzarone.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Carol, you can go first.

11 MS. SOTO: Okay. Are you not suing the board and
12 the DHCR?

13 MR. LANZARONE: We are. Yes, we are.

14 MS. SOTO: You are. And so don't you feel like
15 you've been subverting a democratic process that's going on
16 here?

17 MR. LANZARONE: No, the city -- no. The cities
18 report that legally. The city acted illegally. I'm sorry.

19 MS. SOTO: Yeah, I beg to disagree with you.

20 MR. LANZARONE: Okay.

21 MS. SOTO: Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. TIERNEY: So, Mr. Lanzarone, I'm very grateful
23 that you're no longer homeless.

24 MR. LANZARONE: Me, too.

25 MR. TIERNEY: Does -- if you view this Board as

1 illegitimate, why are you providing public comment here?

2 MR. LANZARONE: Just so that the public will
3 understand that they've been perhaps fed disinformation.
4 They have to reset their expectations for what you are
5 actually allowed to do. It has nothing to do with empathy.

6 MR. TIERNEY: So at our hearing on the 25th, I
7 asked what the average turnover rate for your membership is
8 for the Hudson Valley Property Owner Association. Do you
9 have that information for us?

10 MR. LANZARONE: Zero.

11 MR. TIERNEY: You have a zero turnover rate year to
12 year?

13 MR. LANZARONE: Yes.

14 MR. TIERNEY: Okay. Thank you. No further
15 questions.

16 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Any other questions?

17 Yes, Mie?

18 MS. INOUYE: Yes, two questions. So how many ETPA
19 covered landlords does your organization represent?

20 MR. LANZARONE: It's 59 buildings, it's
21 approximately 40 homes.

22 MS. INOUYE: And last week I asked you when you
23 testified, how much have those landlords increased the rent
24 in the past five years and you didn't have an answer. Do
25 you now have an answer?

1 MR. LANZARONE: I'm not sure. But I will tell you
2 that we heard before from the first speaker that rents have
3 increased 39 percent since 2010. I will tell you that the
4 rate of inflation from 2010 to today is within single digits
5 of that number. So basically, rents in Kingston have
6 increased basically in line with general inflation around
7 the country. And rents in Kingston have also gone up in
8 line with rents around the country. Nothing really unusual
9 about Kingston, New York.

10 MR. TIERNEY: Actually. I do have further
11 questions.

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes?

13 MT. TIERNEY: So if you were sitting on this Board,
14 would you set a rent reduction, freeze, or increase? And
15 what would you -- what do you believe the look back period
16 should be?

17 MR. LANZARONE: Well, I think a lookback period is
18 clearly illegal because since 2015, the Magna Carta, in
19 which carried forth into our Constitution that governments
20 do not apply laws retroactively. So I think that's
21 something that you need to understand. And so, looking
22 forward, the general rate of inflation for all costs for
23 this year is about seven to eight percent. And so looking
24 forward into 2023, if you go by the data, that would suggest
25 that rent should go up seven or eight percent. And that's

1 if you go by data, if this is a political process, you might
2 come to a different conclusion; however, you will be legally
3 required to basically justify anything based on the actual
4 data.

5 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I have a couple of questions.

7 MR. LANZARONE: Sure.

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Rich, you on -- when last we
9 met and today you have advised this Board about some of the
10 particulars of the law covering our activity.

11 MR. LANZARONE: Yes.

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: What are your qualifications
13 to offer that advice?

14 MR. LANZARONE: Well, you should know that --

15 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Like, are you presenting this
16 advice because you're a lawyer, are you presenting this
17 advice as an amateur? What is this -- where are you coming
18 from?

19 MR. LANZARONE Okay. So I'll give you a little bit
20 about my experience.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yeah, please.

22 MR. LANZARONE: Okay. So I've been to a municipal
23 planner in the County of Ulster for 20 plus years. I served
24 on the Ulster County Planning Board. I served on the
25 Rondout Valley Central School Board. I'm a fellow of The

1 Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress and I'm a property owner.

2 So we talked about the impact beyond just rent
3 regulation, but the impact of this investment and
4 properties.

5 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm still trying to figure
6 out where you see in the law our responsibility is to make
7 the economics of rental buildings work. I'm trying to
8 figure out is that our responsibility? What evidence do you
9 have for that being our responsibility?

10 I brought a copy of New York Tenant Landlord Law in
11 case you would like --

12 MR. LANZARONE: So are you suggesting that you
13 think that you have the power to and it would be advisable
14 to bankrupt private -- private landlords? Is that what
15 you're out to do? You don't think you have a responsibility
16 to make sure that the housing stock remains viable?

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They need supporting people.
18 Don't outweigh the needs of counsel.

19 MS. PUENTES: You know what, he let you talk.

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you for coming, Rich.

21 MR. LANZARONE: You're very welcome.

22 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I appreciate it.
23 Any other questions?

24 MS. PUENTES: No, let him go.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Kwame Holmes (phonetic)?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You have all the people here
2 that are struggling to pay their rent, that are being taken
3 advantage of and he's going to come here and talk --

4 MR. TAMPONE: Ma'am, if you would like to speak,
5 you can sign up.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I would encourage people who
7 have something to say to the Board to sign up and come and
8 say it into the microphone so it can be on the record.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. HOLMES: Kwame Holmes, I'm a renter here in
11 Kingston and I'm also professor at Bard College and I'm
12 really happy that I was able to come up after Rich and made
13 some interesting claims and I just want to address a couple
14 of them.

15 The first that I'm interested in addressing is that
16 rent increases is Blue State problem, which is something
17 that he said in the beginning of his talk. You might
18 notice, however, at the very end he said there's national
19 inflation, so it's happening -- or you can fight the
20 internal defeat in some argument.

21 But I just wanted to offer some data from some Red
22 States. Florida, there's been a statewide increase in rent
23 of 31.7 percent in 2021. In Oklahoma, there's been a
24 similar rent increase of 17 percent in last year. In
25 Louisiana, there's been a 19.4 percent increase in rent

1 since 2020 each year. So those are deregulated Red States
2 and it suggests that his argument does not hold a lot of
3 water. It's not a question of whether Blue States
4 regulation so much as the profiteering.

5 So the other thing I wanted to mention is that
6 there's more that should be sort of motivating us besides
7 the question on economic justice. Rental increases are also
8 a public health epidemic. The stress that a person
9 experiences each year wondering if there's going to be a
10 rent increase could actually be measured in what's called
11 allostatic load, which is the public health board measuring
12 of psychological stress that effects the body it can effect
13 (inaudible) functions. So we're experiencing a COVID
14 epidemic, RSV epidemic, (inaudible) epidemic, and
15 also like profiteering epidemic. So we need some kind of
16 relief (inaudible) of trauma that's here in our community.
17 So that's what's in my career to advocate for a reduction of
18 30 percent every year.

19 The other thing is that Rich makes claims -- his
20 lawsuit claims that there can't be a housing emergency in
21 Kingston because there hasn't been a change in population
22 sufficient to match a decline in available apartments, which
23 is a really silly argument because there's lots of ways
24 there could be less available apartments that is
25 disconnected from the general population.

1 So, for example, if you are a renter in one of the
2 many buildings in Kingston that have over 200 units, that
3 building is sold to a single family and they never move
4 here, that they can also -- it could be there vacation home,
5 that will cause a reduction number of available units, but
6 not actual population, okay?

7 Another thing that can happen is you can convert
8 (inaudible) building units into an Airbnb, okay? Which
9 won't typically change the population, but will still reduce
10 the number of available units. So the entire basis of their
11 lawsuit against the board is that there has been actual
12 change in population that's not a way of measuring the number
13 of building units. That's so -- you have to be really
14 careful about the words that they use then it adds up to
15 used language to make a case but that's not actually based
16 in an analysis of what changed (inaudible).

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Are there questions?

19 MR. TIERNEY: So this is me asking you as a renter.

20 MR. HOLMES: Sure, yeah.

21 MR. TIERNEY: What percentage of your income do you
22 pay in housing?

23 MR. HOLMES: This is really embarrassing. I think
24 I pay very, very close like 30 percent.

25 MR. TIERNEY: So you are rent burdened and you are

1 a college professor?

2 MR. HOLMES: Indeed. It wasn't my (inaudible).
3 No, I mean it's a really important point. I think that
4 there's lots of people who are rent burdened for not at a
5 working class income but that because of, you know, it could
6 be credit issue or it could be student debt. There are
7 people who are at higher incomes who are also rent burdened
8 and I don't think we should be at the center of the
9 conversation but yeah, it so exists.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Any questions?

11 Yeah, Mie?

12 MS. INOUYE: So you advocated for a -- you're
13 asking the Board to make a 30 percent reduction.

14 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, absolutely.

15 MS. INOUYE: -- in rent. Could you say a little
16 bit about why you think that's appropriate?

17 MR. HOLMES: Well, this would be an opportunity to
18 think about how (inaudible) but Rich was also saying about
19 how laws don't work retroactively, which I think is kind of
20 a silly idea when we live in a society where you can get
21 back pay, if you've been denied for a -- legally by
22 employers, if it's punitive damages for a lawsuit, but I'm
23 saying if it was precedence for back pay, certainly there
24 precedents for back pay because of all the reparation cases,
25 whether it's the people who got punitive damages for

1 deputies internment, right? Certainly, if you
2 could imagine there are reparations for slavery, there would
3 be some back pay to be able to have to pass so I think
4 there's lots of precedents for thinking about paying people
5 back money that they've already paid and it's not anti-Magna
6 Carta in any sense.

7 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Other questions?

8 MS. PUENTES: The number of 30 percent has been
9 bouncing around. Where did that number come from?

10 MR. HOLMES: Well, I think there's been since 2020
11 about a 30 percent increase in rent. That was also the
12 number that was about how much property prices increase in
13 the same time-frame. So I think it's about getting people
14 to reset back to that pre-pandemic --

15 MS. PUENTES: And what's your reference for that?
16 Is there a documentation of reference that we can use?

17 MR. HOLMES: Pattern for Progress has
18 documented the increases in property values. In rents, I
19 can send some article. There's been quite a few.

20 MS. PUENTES: I would really appreciate that.

21 MR. HOLMES: Yeah.

22 MR. TAMPONE: So in specifically tied to the
23 research that you do, in an advocacy for a reduction, how
24 do you -- again, from a researcher's point of view, how do
25 you support the sustainability of a rental market and the

1 creation and maintenance of new rental units or just housing
2 in general in an environment where we regulate a lower
3 amount of income for that entire operation? Right? Like,
4 how do --

5 MR. HOLMES: Sure.

6 MR. TAMPONE: -- you -- do you have any experience
7 in your research that shows that's -- that there is a model
8 that that could be sustainable and how would that work?

9 MR. HOLMES: No, I don't study back layers which
10 occurred to build new housing. That's not part of my
11 expertise, sir, in anyway that I will speak on it.

12 MR. TAMPONE: Okay.

13 MR. TIERNEY: I actually do kind of have a tangent
14 to a related follow-up question.

15 So you spoke to how rent increases and that sort of
16 wondering if your lease will be renewed is a stressor on
17 public health. Is there -- can you speak to anything about
18 the adverse? Would we see any changes from a reduction in
19 public health?

20 MR. HOLMES: In terms of stress?

21 MR. TIERNEY: Yeah, if they were spending less
22 money on rent.

23 MR. HOLMES: Certainly. I mean, yeah, that's kind
24 of intuitive.

25 MR. TIERNEY: For the record.

1 MR. HOLMES: I mean, yeah, I can talk a little bit
2 more about when there's more stress in a community, there's
3 a higher incidents of crime, there's -- people have a harder
4 time showing up to work and maintaining within work life.
5 So there's a whole range of benefits that come from
6 reductions in stress, but I don't have evidence of
7 (inaudible). A massive reduction rent. So there's not a
8 lot of research that would tell us what would happen to a
9 community if it were to happen, because it's very
10 (inaudible).

11 MR. TIERNEY: A model community.

12 MR. HOLMES: Indeed, yeah. Absolutely.

13 MS. PUENTES: I want to volunteer.

14 MR. HOLMES: Please. I suppose you have a
15 question?

16 MS. PUENTES: No, no. I said I want to volunteer
17 for this community.

18 MR. HOLMES: That sounds lovely.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much, Kwame.

20 MR. HOLMES: Thanks, everyone.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Lisa Royer
22 (phonetic)?

23 MS. ROYER: Hi, everybody. Can you hear me?

24 MR. TIERNEY: Just come a little bit closer to the
25 mic.

1 MS. ROYER: All right. Can you hear me now?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

3 MR. ROYER: My name is Lisa Royer. I'm a cofounder
4 of Rise up Kingston and I'm a resident at 58 Fair Street,
5 which has been the topic of discussion here tonight. The
6 gentleman that came up and spoke about the residents at 58th
7 Fair Street, saying that we owe money back, I'd like to give
8 you the description of what really happened with our
9 building. And I'd also like to say that I'd be grateful for
10 the day that our most vulnerable citizens don't have to come
11 up here with trauma for our city officials to do the right
12 thing.

13 Our elderly residents should be at home resting on
14 a Saturday. They should not have to be here.

15 So 58 Fair Street, I've moved four times in the
16 last two years, twice because of slum lords and twice
17 because of death threats that -- around the community work
18 that I do here in Kingston. So thank you to everybody that
19 showed up today. You're really brave. Keep coming out and
20 keep speaking your truth.

21 58 and Fair Street, I moved in January -- no, I
22 moved in on New Year's Eve, we were excited, we had a bottle
23 of champagne in paper cups while we were moving stuff in.
24 And I had come like a week before, because we were homeless,
25 to see the apartment. They were in there painting, putting

1 new rugs down, it seemed amazing and I had some folks that I
2 knew from doing the community work that already lived there,
3 that they've lived there for years and years, and I was
4 happy to be in a building with them.

5 About a week in, we're unpacking, we discovered
6 that we were infested with roaches and mice were in the
7 building, that the landlord never took out the garbage, that
8 the lady on the second floor who has disabilities does it
9 for the whole building, which is seven apartments. And he
10 was in -- he was about to sell it. He wasn't sure, kept
11 going back and forth about when it was going to be sold. It
12 was sold in March. March 15 I received a letter from the
13 new landlord, which is Uptown Kingston LLC., they had bought
14 multiple units in this city and are kicking all of their
15 residents out, from what I hear.

16 And so in March, they came and said that we owed
17 March's rent. I said I already paid it to the previous
18 landlord on March 1, when it was due, he said that there was
19 problems with other tenants. He started to tell me their
20 problems. He walked into my apartment without
21 authorization. He has bribed us with -- to share \$50 worth
22 of pizza between the seven apartments to show our apartments
23 illegally, he has -- so it's on the market right now for
24 \$1.2 million. It's right over here on Fair Street, which is
25 the same street that the Kingstonian is going to be built

1 on. So we -- so I want to use a community mic to use our
2 demands. So when I say it and then y'all repeat me, okay?
3 So tonight we demand a 30 percent rent reduction. At least.
4 And we demand the longest possible look back period seen.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Lisa.

7 MS. PUENTES: You came to the microphone and you
8 said you were going to address the subject of the people who
9 hold five months rent. Is that something --

10 MS. ROYER: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I addressed
11 mine, but I didn't address it. So in most cases in our
12 building, the landlord has added on about \$3,500 to our
13 case, which was lies and so there was no way for us to prove
14 that we did pay that because it was a lie, you know, because
15 he had just bought it in March. So if they go back and see
16 the testimony from our eviction court, we all stated that he
17 came in and added an extra \$3,500 onto each one of our rents
18 and that's why we're in court for nonpayment.

19 MS. PUENTES: I'm sorry. I don't understand. So
20 you paid him --

21 MS. ROYER: We paid him the amount that we owe.
22 The papers that he put into court for eviction, each
23 apartment, it says an additional \$3,500, that we didn't owe,
24 that he lied and added onto the paperwork and said that we
25 did owe.

1 MS. PUENTES: Okay.

2 MS. ROYER: Uh-huh. And so that's the nonpayment.
3 It's for the lies that he made up.

4 MR. TIERNEY: So you're currently in an ETPA unit,
5 but --

6 MS. ROYER: Yes.

7 MR. TIERNEY: -- you are facing an eviction? When
8 was that court date started? When was that filed?

9 MS. ROYER: I'm not sure when it was filed. I
10 believe July. And I went to court August 11th. And when I
11 spoke in court, I said to the judge that I had been to Legal
12 Services and they gave us a paper to represent ourselves
13 because they were overbooked. And then the judge said that
14 he wasn't aware that they were overbooked. The judge also
15 wasn't aware of the new laws because they had just went into
16 place, I think, a week before that.

17 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

18 MS. ROYER: Yep.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Lisa.

20 MS. ROYER: You're welcome.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Ashley Holder?

22 MS. HOLDER: Hi. My name is Ashley Holder. I live
23 at 297 Hasbrouck Ave. I'm a renter. I'm not part of ETPA,
24 but I just want to quickly share the way that rents are
25 increasing in my building. To reflect that rents are

1 increasing in Kingston. So I live in a group house, there
2 are eight adults and a toddler in my house. Each of us have
3 an individual lease for our room. And I have a roommate who
4 moved in two years ago in 2020. She pays \$650 for her room.
5 I moved at the beginning of this year and I pay \$720 for a
6 smaller room than she has. And then we have another
7 roommate -- two roommates who moved in, in August of this
8 year and her room's the same size as the girl who pays \$650,
9 they pay \$800 and \$850.

10 So our landlord has been in creasing rent. So
11 someone is paying is \$650 for a room and someone paying --
12 with the same size room -- is paying \$800, so that's about
13 25 percent more. And our landlord will often tell us -- he
14 lives on the property and he will often tell us that he
15 could be charging more and he chooses not to. He often will
16 talk about market rate rents are going up, you guys are
17 lucky that I'm not charging more.

18 And my roommates, most of them are from the Hudson
19 Valley or they're from elsewhere up state like Western New
20 York and they work in restaurants, they're graduate
21 students, they're artists and musicians and they don't have
22 big, fancy type jobs or anything. So we're very lucky that
23 we're paying a lot less than a lot of people in this room,
24 but at the same time, as you can see, the rent increase from
25 2020 to 2022 is about 25 percent for rooms of the same size.

1 So, yeah, I would like to echo everyone else that
2 would call for a rent reduction of at least 30 percent and
3 along with a lookback period as well, because, yeah, it's
4 clearly been a problem before COVID and rents are just going
5 up and it's unaffordable.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Ashley, I have the email that
8 you sent to the Board. Do you want me to read it into
9 the --

10 MS. HOLDER: No, it's fine. It's the same.

11 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

12 MS. PUENTES: This email to the Board was sent on
13 November 2nd, 2022.

14 "Maintenance, my main concern at this time is the
15 work of Building 19."

16 So she, Ms. Carol Komosa is in apartment
17 19A in Stony Run.

18 "The gutters, flashing, and down spouts need
19 replacing. When we get a down pour, the water comes down on
20 my patio and seeps through the slider. I keep towels along
21 the slider inside at all times, just in case. I also bought
22 sandbags and placed them at the edge of my patio, but water
23 has a way of getting through.

24 "My neighbor and I have been to the office several
25 times about this problem. I've had termites and I have not

1 been able to get a definite answer as to whether that's been
2 resolved. I'm told to vacuum on the hallway. I guess I'll
3 see if they come back this winter.

4 "Rent. My rent was \$965 last year, it was raised
5 to \$1,092 as of June 2022, plus trash, water, sewer fees.
6 That's \$127 -- that's a \$127 increase. If I went
7 month-to-month the rent would have been \$1,905."

8 This is from Carol Calosa, 19A Stony Run.

9 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

10 Christine Brockmire (phonetic).

11 MS. BROCKMIRE: I have some photos just to pass
12 around. The photos going this way show the deteriorating
13 buildings. And the other one shows -- speak to the size of
14 my one-bedroom unit.

15 MR. TIERNEY: Can we keep these?

16 MS. BROCKMIRE: Sure. And I also have a copy of my
17 lease.

18 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

19 MS. BROCKMIRE: Good afternoon. Thank you for this
20 opportunity to speak. I really appreciate it. As I said,
21 my name is Christine Brockmire. I live in 14C Stony Run and
22 I signed my lease this past February 2022 and moved to Stony
23 Run out of sheer desperation.

24 My daughter was in a desperate situation. She had
25 a 10-month old baby and could not get daycare. We lived

1 comfortably in a beautiful home in South Carolina and sold
2 our home and moved to Kingston. We could not find a home to
3 buy in Kingston for what we sold out home for in South
4 Carolina. Not even close. As a matter of fact, my rent
5 here is \$300 more a month than I was paying for a 1,400
6 square foot home. We moved into Stony Run out of
7 desperation. We could not find another place to live. It
8 was impossible. There was a time crunch for us because my
9 daughter would lose her job, which is a very good job if she
10 did not get daycare soon. So I had a friend that was
11 working for Stony Run he said, oh, there's a really nice
12 apartment. You've got to come see it. We looked at it and
13 I said, It's small, but we'll make it work.

14 We moved in, in February and we signed our lease.
15 My rent is \$1,660 a month for a one-bedroom, one bath
16 apartment with an eat-in kitchen. We have a small, little
17 patio space that is not usable at this point because we also
18 have a roof that is caving in and pouring water into our
19 little tiny outside space.

20 I'm here to ask for a rent decrease. I am paying
21 an astronomical amount of money for a tiny little space. My
22 husband retired when we moved here. We are now on Social
23 Security income and my daughter provides me with a slight
24 little bit more of income so that we can survive, since I
25 watch her child.

1 This is not affordable. The money that we had
2 saved for our retirement is going 50 percent faster than we
3 ever imagined. And in two years from now, we will be penny
4 less. There's no way. We're out.

5 We need this decrease. Everybody around that I
6 talked to, the people next door haven't paid their rent in
7 three years, they had a note on their door, they were paying
8 \$850 a month rent for the same space I'm paying \$1,660. I
9 find it disgusting. We have had repairs that we begged for
10 them to fix. I come to find my building -- my space was
11 completely mold infested and it was vacant for several
12 months before we moved in, which was never disclosed to us.
13 I have breathing problems, I had problems since I moved in,
14 and unfortunately, we can't find another place to live.

15 When you don't have a job because you're on Social
16 Security and I have to watch my daughter's child, it's very
17 difficult. You're -- we are literally living paycheck to
18 paycheck, which is Social Security. And even with this
19 slight little bit more that we're going to get this year, it
20 doesn't make up for the food expenses, the gas expenses, and
21 everything else.

22 So I'm imploring you to think about this community
23 and what it's doing to people. We are at our wits end.
24 You're our last hope. We need this decrease of 30 percent,
25 please.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you. Ms. Brockmire, there's
3 four of you living in a one-bedroom apartment?

4 MS. BROCKMIRE: Yes.

5 MR. TIERNEY: Oh, okay. I apologize.

6 MS. BROCKMIRE: It's myself, my husband, and then I
7 watch my granddaughter when my daughter's at work.

8 MR. TIERNEY: And so you're on a fixed income?

9 MS. BROCKMIRE: We are.

10 MR. TIERNEY: And so you would not be able to
11 handle an increase or even -- and a freeze seems very
12 important to you?

13 MS. BROCKMIRE: Absolutely not. We're living off
14 of our life savings. That's it.

15 MR. TIERNEY: Living off your life savings. Okay.
16 Thank you so much.

17 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Paul Mersfelter (phonetic)?
18 Paul? Paul Mersfelter, no?

19 Nicole Surlick (phonetic)? Good afternoon.

20 MS. SURLICK: Good afternoon. Can you all hear me?

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yeah.

22 MS. SURLICK: I got a lot to say and a little time
23 to say. In 2020, I was living in a three-bedroom house in
24 Lake Katrine between and I was paying \$1,250 a month. The
25 landlord decided to sell and we have to find a new place to

1 live. As a previous speaker said, in short, we moved into
2 Stony Run in desperation because we could not find anything
3 else. Our rent went from \$1,250 to \$1,750. That's a 71
4 percent increase in rent that I had to pay.

5 We've lived there for a year now. Over the year,
6 we faced a litany of leaks in our house, which were, to be
7 fair, repaired in two or three days in general. We did have
8 a lovely water feature for about three days, with water
9 poured down from our ceiling.

10 In 2022, we, too, received a threatening letter
11 that if we didn't sign up, our month-to-month would be
12 \$2,300. We received -- our rent increase was to \$1,981, a
13 13 percent increase. This leads me to have to pay roughly
14 50 percent of my income towards rent. I'm here to request a
15 30 percent rent reduction and a lookback as far as possible.

16 Would it be okay if I asked the room a question?

17 MR. TIERNEY: You can ask a rhetorical question?

18 CHAIRMAN KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yeah.

19 MS. SURLICK: Okay. Consider this a rhetorical
20 question, anybody here looking at a seven percent increase
21 in salary this year? Because I'm sure not. And I wasn't
22 looking at a 13 percent increase in salary either.

23 This problem goes deeper than just rent, you know,
24 it goes to salary. How much people are being paid. If the
25 gentleman before wants to raise the rent, then he has to be

1 making sure that people are being paid a living wage. You
2 have to be on that bill saying, yes, these people need to be
3 paid more, because otherwise we can't afford it.

4 I want to go back to my apartment for a minute.
5 Between July 4th and August 18th of this year, we were
6 living with either leaks or unfinished repairs. I had a
7 hole in my kitchen wall for six months.

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you for your testimony,
9 Nicole, and thank you also for sending --

10 MS. SURLICK: Oh, you saw those?

11 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: -- a more detailed list to
12 this Board's email. I appreciate that.

13 Any questions?

14 MR. TIERNEY: Yes. Thank you, Ms. Surlick. Are
15 you -- for that 13 percent increase that your next lease
16 wanted to have, was there anything in the lease that would
17 indicate a 13 percent increase in services?

18 MS. SURLICK: No. And somebody else said they've
19 been doing what I've been calling, putting lipstick on a pig.
20 You know, they've been doing some outdoor fixing up, they
21 added a dog park, they put in a new children's playground.
22 But in terms of internal repairs for the tenants, you've
23 heard from other people, months. Months it goes on.

24 You know, and I'd like to speak to Rich again.
25 Renting from somebody is a two-way street. You know, it's

1 not -- and i don't know you as a landlord, so I'm not
2 judging you -- but it's a two-way street. You know, when
3 you pay rent --

4 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm sorry. I would prefer if
5 you would address the Board.

6 MS. SURLICK: Oh, okay. When you pay rent, you're
7 expecting certain services for that rent. I have not
8 received the services I deserve from my rent.

9 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.
10 Michelle Hirsch?

11 MS. HIRSCH: Good afternoon, Chairman Kippley-Ogman
12 and members of the Rent Guidelines Board. My name is
13 Michelle Hirsch and I serve on the Kingston Common Council,
14 representing the people of the 9th Ward, which includes the
15 residents of the 160 apartments that make up the Mansion
16 Apartments on West Chestnut Street.

17 It's important that I came out and speak on their
18 behalf, because many -- since I ran for office in 2019 --
19 that I spoke with have been pushed out, are no longer
20 members of our community. People that are still residing
21 there are afraid to come out and speak. They're afraid of
22 retaliation.

23 During my campaign in 2019, I spoke with a large
24 majority of senior citizens that called these apartments
25 home for over 25 years and could no longer afford the

1 astronomical rent increases that they were receiving. This
2 is a sleepy, off the beat and track apartment complex, and
3 citizens that have been living there for quite a while, over
4 25 years and were receiving increases of -- rental increases
5 of 25 percent and up.

6 When I took office January 1st, 2020, by the end of
7 February that year, the residents of Mansion Apartments were
8 the victims of an illegal lockout by the landlord.
9 The landlord at the time did not pay the Central Hudson
10 Bills, so the buildings were posted for turn-off-the-gas
11 notices and the gas was used for cooking and heating in all
12 the apartments and the electric in the common areas.

13 The landlord came in and started removing the
14 postings in front of a photographer for the Daily Freeman.
15 And these actions terrorized the residents during the
16 winter, at a time when COVID was just breaking here in New
17 York.

18 During the next year, many of the residents that
19 I've formed relationships with had to leave our community.
20 There are still a few of the original senior citizens that
21 have been able to remain, but just this summer, some of them
22 received 20 percent rent increases with their new lease.
23 They're paying about 40 percent of their fixed income on
24 rents. And I've heard from many of them that they would not
25 be able to stay past this year if there is not a rent

1 decrease or a lookback period that can go back to prior to
2 the pandemic. There are also rent increases on apartments
3 that were vacated that are upwards of 67 percent. So
4 one-bedroom apartments went up to \$2,000 a month.

5 I know this Board has to take all testimony
6 together into consideration when making their decisions for
7 all of the ETPA protective apartments. But based on what
8 I've observed in -- apartments, the lookback period should
9 go back to 2019 and I request that you enact a rent
10 reduction which would make Kingston much more affordable for
11 thousands of residents.

12 I just also want to say in regards to Stony Run,
13 while not in my ward, I just find the actions of the
14 landlords to be egregious and inhumane, immoral, and to push
15 tenants into a situation where laws that were already on the
16 books were being violated is just not right. And I think
17 that you have the power to help stabilize these families
18 within our community.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you so much, Alderwoman Hirsch
21 for addressing the Board. Would you say that when you speak
22 with constituents, the cost of housing is one of the main
23 issues that they --

24 MS. HIRSCH: Yeah, it's a huge --

25 MR. TIERNEY: Bring to you?

1 MS. HIRSCH: A huge issue. I've spent countless
2 hours on the phone with many of the residents.

3 MR. TIERNEY: And in the now three, four years that
4 you've been representing the 9th Ward, have you noticed any
5 improvements made to Chestnut Mansion or other covered
6 properties or, you know, an increase in services?

7 MS. HIRSCH: There have been some improvements in
8 some of the apartments when they were vacant, but then those
9 rents went up dramatically. Common areas are unlocked, not
10 in such great condition. Parking lot filled with potholes
11 up until this month.

12 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you. And I do have another
13 follow-up question. So you were a part of the council that
14 recognized that there was a housing crisis.

15 MS. HIRSCH: Yes.

16 MR. TIERNEY: Do you still believe that there is a
17 housing crisis?

18 MS. HIRSCH: Absolutely. That's also a reason I
19 ran for office going back to 2018, 19 because my work with
20 families here in Kingston that are struggling to find
21 affordable housing.

22 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you so much, Alderman.

23 MS. HIRSCH: Thank you.

24 MR. BROWN: I have -- have those residents stated
25 where they would go being forced out of here in the next

1 year or so?

2 MS. PUENTES: Could you repeat the question?

3 MS. HIRSCH: So the question was, have residents
4 stated where they would go? They actually don't know. I've
5 been trying to help them find lists, you know, for over 55
6 housing or get on waiting list for vouchers -- for Section 8
7 vouchers.

8 MR. TIERNEY: I actually have a follow-up. So
9 you're saying that part of the role that you've taken on as
10 Alderwoman is helping constituents leave your own district?

11 MS. HIRSCH: Yeah. One resident at Mansion
12 Apartments was really pushed out too for helping organize
13 tenants and she was harassed and pushed out.

14 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you so much.

15 MS. HIRSCH: Thank you.

16 MS. INOUYE: You said that you ran for office to
17 address the housing crisis in Kingston. I'm just curious,
18 like, this -- I know this law covers a small percentage of
19 the housing stock in Kingston, how do you see ETPA and the
20 rent reduction that you're advocating for, you know, how
21 will this help address the crisis as a whole?

22 MS. HIRSCH: That's a great question.

23 MS. INOUYE: And do you have a sense like what
24 else, you know, what are the -- how does this fit in to your
25 vision of, you know, housing justice in Kingston?

1 MS. HIRSCH: Well, I think at a local level, it's
2 very hard to enact laws that will protect all of our renters
3 here in the city. But we have a high majority of renters.
4 Like, over 50 percent of the city is made up of renters.
5 And we have -- I think that in a broader sense, that it has
6 to come down from a state level, possibly ETPA needs to be
7 expanded to cover units built after 1974 and enact these
8 legislations for, you know, all renters.

9 MS. PUENTES: I'm not sure I understand your answer
10 about what this -- if the Rent Guidelines Board lowered rent
11 30 percent, how would that help the residents who aren't --

12 MS. HIRSCH: Well, I'm -- yeah, unfortunately, it
13 doesn't help the residents that have already been displaced.
14 You know, this is coming a few years too late, but I think
15 that it's important that we stabilize, you know, the people
16 that are still here. We don't know what it's going to look
17 like in the future and how high rent could go if things
18 weren't regulated. So I think that we need to fix whatever
19 that we can.

20 MR. TAMPONE: How do you see the rent being
21 non-ETPA affected units in your ward, rents to those units
22 being affected by what may be artificially low regulated
23 rents in ETPA affected properties?

24 MS. HIRSCH: I think that in those situations,
25 there's more leeway that then the landlords themselves can

1 take on the smaller landlords and enact you know -- if they
2 aren't -- the smaller -- it will be on the smaller
3 landlords.

4 MS. PUENTES: I don't understand that answer.

5 MR. TAMPONE: Yeah. I guess what I'm trying to get
6 at is, what do you think will happen to the rents of other
7 buildings that are not covered under ETPA on the city-wide,
8 honestly?

9 MS. HIRSCH: I can't say for sure. I don't know.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

11 MS. HIRSCH: Okay. Thank you.

12 MS. PUENTES: You want me to do another one?

13 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Sure.

14 MS. PUENTES: The Rent Guidelines Board received
15 this email on November 2nd, 2022 from KayCee Wimbish
16 (phonetic).

17 "Dear members of the Rent Guidelines Board, I am in
18 strong support of a rent reduction of a rent reduction for
19 all units that qualify for in ETPA buildings.

20 "It is imperative to have the longest look back
21 period possible and that these reductions are made and made
22 quickly. The housing situation in Kingston has become
23 untenable for most renters. People should not be paying
24 more than 30 percent of their income for rent. It is nearly
25 impossible for everyone working in the Hudson Valley wages

1 and salaries to not pay significantly more than this for a
2 rental apartment.

3 "Again, please, please pass a rent reduction for
4 all tenants that qualify.

5 "In support of an economically community,
6 "KayCee Wimbish."

7 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Amanda Treasure?

8 MS. TREASURE: Hi. Thank you for letting me speak.
9 I've lived at Stony Run. I've been there for 17 years, seen
10 so far -- well, I actually never met the owners of the
11 building ever. We always see the management teams that they
12 have there, which now we're going into -- I don't even know
13 who manages it right now because we had a team, they left,
14 they bought in -- a management was there, they left. The
15 next one that came in, we had people in the office. Now we
16 don't have an office to go to. We have to put our rent in a
17 dropbox, which who knows when they're going to get it or
18 what's going on with it.

19 I feel that we definitely need a rent reduction
20 because they've raised my rent, this new lease, \$150. They
21 want to raise the rent, but they don't want to fix what
22 needs to be fixed. I had an issue with mold, which I still
23 do. We have mold coming out of the air duct vents, mold on
24 the window sills, mold in the bathroom. I had to end up --
25 a few years back -- getting Kingston Housing Authority

1 involved because they wouldn't fix my leaking shower that
2 would lead to my neighbor's apartment.

3 I pay my rent every month. I should not have to
4 deal with them not fixing what needs to be fixed. And I
5 have to work so much -- because my husband's on
6 disability -- in order to be able to make ends meet would
7 alleviate all the stress that I have on me for having to be
8 at work. Usually I'm working anywhere from 60-80 hours a
9 week because I gotta make ends meet and that's not how
10 someone should have to live. And we should not have to live
11 with mold because my son and I both have asthma and here we
12 are living in an apartment that has black mold, which I did
13 have it tested. It came back from the lab saying that
14 anybody who had respiratory or breathing issues, it's
15 dangerous for. And I had sent to you guys that form from
16 that and the rent increase I had sent it through email.

17 And I really feel that a rent reduction of 30
18 percent is fair. We need to be able to live and not have to
19 live in conditions that they're not going to fix, that --
20 it's just terrible and to have to fight for that, we
21 shouldn't have to do that.

22 If we call them -- you know, we had a gas leak in
23 our building, which I live in the same building that Ms.
24 Esposito lives in and we didn't have water for five days
25 straight, no hot water. And they like to Band-Aid stuff and

1 not fix it the proper way. And I shouldn't have to be
2 having to clean my windows, clean my vent ducts, all that
3 stuff with bleach all the time. It shouldn't have that.
4 You want my money, but you don't want to fix things. That's
5 not the way it's supposed to go. It's not.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

7 MS. TREASURE: Thank you.

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Any questions?

9 MR. TIERNEY: So in the 17 years that you lived at
10 Stony Run, has your rent ever decreased?

11 MS. TREASURE: No.

12 MR. TIERNEY: And have you seen their
13 responsiveness to these maintenance issues increase or
14 decrease in those 17 years?

15 MS. TREASURE: There is a lot of issues that I've
16 spoken to a lot of tenants that live around there, my
17 neighbors, where the issues are just ridiculous and none of
18 them are being addressed. No.

19 MR. TIERNEY: So you would say --

20 MS. TREASURE: So you have to battle with them for
21 what? If I pay my rent all the time and I call you and say
22 I have a leak, you should do something. I had to call the
23 Health Department, the building inspectors, with the whole
24 there's nothing they can do for us. That's not cool. It's
25 not.

1 MR. TIERNEY: So would you say that you're getting
2 an increase for a decrease in service?

3 MS. TREASURE: I agree, yes.

4 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

5 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Sorry, we can only take
6 questions from the Board.

7 Any other questions?

8 Thank you so much.

9 MS. TREASURE: Okay. Thank you, guys.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Teddy Archweiger (phonetic)?

11 Unidentified speaker: Teddy's gone.

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Teddy's gone.

13 Eric Jarman? Eric?

14 MR. JARMAN: Thank you for letting me speak. This
15 testimony that was emailed just today with attachments.
16 It's a lease, ERAP letter, and what I like to term a
17 blackmail letter, okay?

18 All right. My name is Eric Jarman and I live at
19 Stony Run since December of 2019 with my wife and
20 stepdaughter. We -- after looking for apartments in Dutch
21 Village and Ulster County, we came across an online address
22 for the property. We looked at an apartment in Building 25.
23 It was too small. After we came back another day, it was
24 promised to us to view an apartment with a den and we were
25 excited.

1 Andrew Goldstein was really quite the illusionist
2 with the imagination of a child who spoke to their invisible
3 friend. My wife and I weren't sure what to make of Andrew's
4 claim of their being a den in the unit we stood in and knew
5 that there was no den to be found.

6 In the end, with very little inventory available
7 and time being a factor, we signed an agreement to move in
8 on December 1st. On inspection and key day, a couple of
9 days before December 1st, we toured the unit and discovered
10 that items that were -- that were sure to be repaired and
11 fixed, were not, in fact, completed. The date was changed
12 to December 15th. We cannot afford any more delays, as our
13 current landlord was expecting to receive back his keys to
14 his house.

15 Our wall was still not painted, even though Andrew
16 said they were. The living room floor had a sub-floor issue
17 which caused a depression in the floorage, which my wife
18 always manages to find and lose her balance. Moving forward
19 many months, I learned that my building neighbor who has --
20 right across -- a two-bedroom with no den either, was paying
21 \$250 less per month than we were. To learn that we were
22 paying a 20 percent premium for the same dated apartment was
23 eye opening, to say the least.

24 What we didn't know was that the City of Kingston
25 was in the middle of a targeted campaign by Wall Street

1 Investment Firms drunk with the idea of giving away money
2 for commercial and residential deals. We learned too later
3 that the exact same floor plan below us, the tenant was also
4 paying \$250 less.

5 I'm about to run out of time. This very facsimile
6 is -- you can read it for yourselves, all right? I'm
7 calling on the Board to actually decrease the rents by 30
8 percent. My argument is further in the actual testimony I
9 encourage you to read it. Over a long lookback period of
10 five years.

11 MR. BROWN: What was the length of residency of
12 your other two neighbors compared to when you moved in?

13 MS. PUENTES: Could you repeat the question?

14 MR. JARMAN: What was the length of the residency?
15 Okay. So the person downstairs, ten years, okay? And the
16 people across, they've been there -- I think they're in
17 their, I believe, eighth year.

18 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Any other questions?

19 Thank you so much, Eric.

20 MR. JARMAN: Thank you.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Rebecca Garrard (phonetic)?

22 MS. GARRARD: Hello. My name is Rebecca Garrard.
23 Currently, I am the Legislative Director for Citizen Action.
24 We've all heard today and you've heard before today really
25 horrific stories about the rent increases and rental

1 conditions in Kingston.

2 My story is going to be about the 2019 campaign to
3 initially pass rent stabilization. In 2019 I was the
4 statewide housing organizer in Citizen Action and worked
5 closely with the community members and elected officials to
6 try to get passed in.

7 As we're all aware, that was not successful, as we
8 saw really egregious examples by the bad players in the real
9 estate industry to manipulate the process. So I'd like to
10 share just a few of those examples of what we saw at this
11 time.

12 One of the things we saw was owners of some of the
13 largest apartment complexes forcing through predatory rent
14 increases during the vacancy rate study. Residents of
15 complexes such as Stony Run, boy, have I heard that name a
16 lot today, as you all have. And Dutch Village received
17 notices that if they didn't immediately sign these renewals
18 that had increases up to double; right, of the rent that
19 they were currently paying? That they would not be offered
20 for renewal when the time came.

21 In addition, there were numerous landlords who
22 simply never reported their vacancies or reported vacancies
23 that were higher than the vacancies we knew to exist from
24 working with the tenants who actually lived in the
25 buildings. And perhaps most egregiously, we had landlords

1 who initiated mass evictions so that they could, in truth,
2 report an artificially high vacancy rate in the moment of
3 time and then immediately relisted the property and of
4 course, were able to fill the apartment, so it wasn't
5 because there was a repair needed or anything like that, so
6 families were displaced. All for the ability to want to
7 hold on to the right to profit on the backs of families that
8 already couldn't pay the rent, feed their families, etc.

9 And so this Board has a really unique opportunity
10 right in this moment. And it's to right the wrongs of the
11 past. And that's not an opportunity many people get. You
12 have the ability to say, we're going to do a lookback to
13 that moment in time when this should have passed and rents
14 should have been regulated then.

15 We know -- and I've listened, not every landlord in
16 2019 was a bad player and not every landlord now was a
17 landlord in 2019. We know that we don't have a crisis right
18 now in Kingston the ability to make a profit as a landlord.
19 And we don't have a crisis in Kingston right now in the
20 ability to sell your property if you are a landlord.

21 What's the crisis we have? We have a crisis in the
22 ability to afford rent. We have a crisis in the ability to
23 find a place to live that's safe and habitable; right?
24 That's the crisis we have and so I appreciate you giving me
25 the time to share my story. I urge you to make this chapter

1 in your story the one where your lookback was at least to
2 that moment and you decide to have a rent reduction that's
3 at least 30 percent.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: We have questions for you.

6 MS. GARRARD: Yes, sorry.

7 MR. TIERNEY: What would you say are the
8 consequences of that fatally flawed 2019 study and where
9 would we have been maybe had that -- shown the crisis that
10 was --

11 MS. GARRARD: Uh-huh. I think we saw immediate
12 consequences; right? Because we saw predatory behaviors in
13 that moment where landlords -- some landlords -- felt the
14 need to price gouge in anticipation of the possible rent
15 stabilization. And then when ultimately that did not happen
16 because of the manipulation of the process, we had the free
17 market influences for the next three years, which allowed
18 for rents to continue to increase due to the nature of the
19 market.

20 And I know -- if anybody wants to ask me a question
21 that was asked before about what are other things that could
22 be done to help people that are not renting ETPA buildings,
23 I'd be happy to take some.

24 MS. PUENTES: Is there -- could you answer that
25 question then? Could you repeat it and answer it?

1 MS. GARRARD: Yeah, so in terms of what could we do
2 for buildings that are not ETPA buildings; right? Because
3 that's such a real question. It's brilliant policy; right?
4 And so to Michelle's point, it would be really important for
5 the state to expand that. That is not something that the
6 city has the ability to do either by including buildings
7 that are post 74 or buildings that are less than six units.
8 But something we have right now with that's a policy that's
9 moving through is TOPA, which is the Tenant Opportunity to
10 Purchase Act and that is a bill; right, that puts state
11 funding into the ability for tenants to acquire ownership of
12 their buildings when it goes up for sale.

13 And so what's really going to start to address the
14 systemic nature of this housing crisis is that instead of
15 the state investing in private development, which is always
16 going to yield to the free market, is that the state invests
17 in community ownership and affordability and perpetuity and
18 provide a sector that will always; right, development. They
19 don't need the state to contribute to that. But what we
20 need the state to actually participate in is community
21 ownership units that exist outside of that free market
22 economy so that people can actually; right, have some sort
23 of stability in our housing structure.

24 So if anybody wants to get involved in the TOPA
25 fight, contact us at Citizen Action or any of the other --

1 MR. TAMPONE: So I'll pose to you the same
2 question I purposed to Alderwoman Hirsch. What -- in your
3 organization's point of view, what is the effect to
4 nonregulated units in the community when we hold whatever
5 regulation we end up making a guideline for on regulated
6 units? Like, how do you see that affecting the market and
7 affecting those tenants who are not covered under ETPA?

8 MS. GARRARD: I mean, I think it has neither a
9 positive nor a negative effect; right? So it's not going to
10 hurt any of the tenants who are not covered under ETPA, but
11 it's frankly probably not going to give them much benefit
12 too, which is why we need to think of other things; right?
13 We're much more likely to have a market effect from these
14 affordable development projects that cities and a state tend
15 to lean into, just to be totally honest; right? It's really
16 easy to think -- and I'm not saying this in a bad way, it's
17 really easy to think microscopically about an individual
18 project and say, okay, like, we're going to invest in this
19 with government funds because we're buying, quote/unquote;
20 right? 50 units, 75 units. But the reality is, what comes
21 with that is usually 250 market rate, quasi luxury units.
22 And so the collateral impact of that is that the affordable
23 market rate units in the surrounding area skyrocket. And so
24 to buy, quote/unquote, those 50 to 75 units, you essentially
25 erase the affordability of the affordable, like, organically

1 affordable units in that entire neighborhood; right?

2 So these are going to be stabilized; right?

3 They're not subsidized, they're not going to really impact
4 the neighborhood the way these developments tend to because
5 they're not going to come with bells and whistles; right?

6 The way these developments do that drive everything up
7 around them. So I would say it's kind of like a net
8 neutral.

9 MR. TAMPONE: Are you aware of any specific policy
10 research that's done by Citizen Action or others to measure
11 the change in rental units in places that have enacted some
12 type of a rent stability, you know, how it affects the other
13 open market units in that space?

14 MS. GARRARD: Yeah. I mean, so this is the first
15 city since the 2019 laws -- but I would say when --

16 MR. TAMPONE: In New York State. Other states are
17 not --

18 MS. GARRARD: Right. Right. I would say when we
19 look at New York City; right? We don't see a direct
20 correlation between rent stabilized buildings and non-rent
21 stabilized buildings within neighborhoods; right? I know
22 that you can't measure, like, an immediate change because
23 that took effect in '74. But we do see a really direct
24 correlation, again, between these projects.

25 There was a really good article recently in City

1 Limits on a project in Brooklyn, I think it was Atlantic
2 Yards, where it had like 80 something affordable units
3 embedded into it. And really what's happened is the
4 demographic; right, of the entire neighborhood has changed
5 because the 80 percent that were not affordable; right, has
6 meant that the affordability of the units that existed
7 before that were free market have drastically risen in
8 costs. And so it went from a predominantly black, working
9 class neighborhood, to now like a predominantly white
10 gentrified neighborhood.

11 But we don't typically see that with rent
12 stabilized buildings because they don't come with -- again,
13 the entire building's rent stabilized, so you don't have
14 this, like, cost benefit analysis of, like, okay, you have
15 this section of affordable, but then you have, like, this
16 large group of, like, bells and whistles kind of units that
17 come with it.

18 MR. TIERNEY: Can I ask my question? How does
19 Citizen Action and yourself as an expert -- thank you for
20 coming -- how has the pandemic affected both the rental
21 market and the relationship between tenants and landlords?

22 MS. GARRARD: Yeah. It's like thrown gasoline on what
23 was already a fire. What's fascinating, right, is that I
24 hear a lot that people think, oh, right when the supply
25 increases, right, the cost decreases. And it just doesn't

1 apply to the rental market. You know, I think we do see
2 that sort of supply and demand trend, right, in the housing
3 market when it comes to sales -- and that's a whole other
4 conversation -- but I just want to note that we just
5 literally don't see that when it comes to the rental market;
6 right? So, first of all, I don't think people move out of
7 Kingston; right? Like, if anything, you have like a surge
8 in when everybody was leaving the city; right, and wanted to
9 move upstate and into the Hudson Valley, so you felt the
10 opposite side of that. But even when we look at it more
11 systemically; right, and people were moving out, it was a
12 very temporary, if any, sort of price decrease.

13 And even when that existed, it has just completely
14 rebounded. The reality is housing is like food, you need it
15 to survive. And so the market is going to set it to
16 whatever it will bear; right? Whatever somebody can cobble
17 together, like, the most that they can cobble together to
18 literally not just be living in their car. And most of the
19 time you have a large population who wind up do living in
20 their car because there's not enough, you know? People are
21 going to do what they have to do to have a roof over their
22 head. And so costs are still out of control in comparison
23 to every affordable metric you could possibly, possibly
24 think of.

25 In an area like Kingston, you have a huge explosion

1 of people who wanted to come to a place like this to escape
2 what were other sort of hotbeds of pockets of COVID, even if
3 it's not their primary residence; right? Stock was ticking
4 up, somebody else spoke about this; right? To have it be
5 like a secondary residence; right? Like an escape that they
6 could use. So maybe you don't see like a huge statistical
7 increase, but stock is taken away from the people who are
8 just trying to make it every day here; right? Who work in
9 the community, who contribute; right?

10 Yeah, so we've seen -- we've only seen an
11 exacerbation; right, homeless numbers have increased during
12 this time, costs have increased, every metric you can think
13 of so the crisis has only gotten worse.

14 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

15 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much. Any other
16 questions?

17 MR. TAMPONE: I got one more question. Is there
18 any housing market that you know of that Citizen Action does
19 work in a case where the housing supply is sufficient to
20 meet demand?

21 MS. GARRARD: In terms of rental or outside rental?

22 MR. TAMPONE: In any scenario where the housing
23 supply is sufficient to meet demand?

24 MS. GARRARD: I would say there's some ownership
25 models where that's the case and yet in that case, the cost

1 is still not accessible to low, moderate, or working class
2 people. There was a really great -- it was a New York Times
3 article that just came out, that said over the last year the
4 largest percentage of buyers in like decades are wealthy
5 white and older buyers; right? The gap between home
6 purchasers has never ever been so large as it was over the
7 last few years.

8 So, yes, even when there's a supply that is able to
9 meet the demand, these seem to be the only people who can
10 access that; right, are generationally racially, and
11 economically advantaged.

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

13 MS. GARRARD: Thank you.

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Kat Baus (phonetic). Kat?
15 Thank you so much.

16 MS. BAUS: Of course. Can you all hear me okay?

17 MR. TIERNEY: A little bit closer.

18 MS. BAUS: My name is Kat Baus. I'm resident of
19 Kingston and I live at 39 Ponckhockie Street. I was lucky
20 enough to rent from a family member in Kingston with a low
21 market rent for the last year and a half. But due to
22 rapidly increasing apartment prices, I cannot afford to rent
23 a place with my partner of one year. And by the end of this
24 month I will be living in Newburgh, where prices have not
25 risen as sharply.

1 I have friends who've been forced to move out of
2 Kingston after their apartment buildings were sold and rent
3 increased beyond their means. One friend who lived in the
4 area for 22 years moved to San Diego because she could not
5 find a single vacant apartment within her means for a 20
6 miles radius despite working more than 40 hours a week.

7 I'm calling on the Board to quickly pass a 30
8 percent rent reduction and allow for the longest lookback
9 period possible when determining what constitutes fair
10 rental increases. The inhumane increases in rent that
11 landlords have forced on local residents began an earnest
12 several years ago with prices doubling since 2015 according
13 to Zillow. And it is essential that any determination take
14 in the full picture of how the situation has developed.

15 If a family loses their home due to a fire or
16 flood, we consider it a tragedy, a freak accident. If a
17 family loses their home due to a landlords deciding to
18 demand more money, the effect is exactly the same, but we
19 consider it business as usual. I encourage the Board to
20 think about the ripple effect of rent gouging beyond the
21 immediate financial impact on the families who live in a
22 given unit.

23 As low and middle income residents are displaced by
24 wealthier residents, prices for all goods increase. It
25 becomes harder for families to afford basic necessities

1 regardless of whether they live in the impacted units
2 themselves. As renting out property becomes more profitable
3 for investors, laborers feel free to charge higher rent not
4 only to residents but to local businesses forcing some to
5 shutter and others to cut back on worthwhile expenses such
6 as fair wages for local workers, certain goods from local
7 makers, investing in sustainable materials, and so on.

8 As families are forced to move out of their
9 neighborhoods and out of Kingston, their children are forced
10 to switch schools in the year disrupting their access to
11 teachers, social supports, academic materials, sports teams,
12 tutoring, counseling, and education as a whole.

13 Kids who experience this type of disruption are
14 less likely to graduate and go onto competitive colleges and
15 careers, not to mention more likely to experience distress
16 and mental illness that has already reached epidemic
17 proportions. The chronic stress of financial and housing
18 insecurity is well documented to negatively impact physical,
19 mental, and social wellbeing on nearly every meaningful
20 matter including immune system strength, blood pressure,
21 productivity in the workplace, cognitive skills, academic
22 performance, alcohol and other drug abuse, and pregnancy
23 complications.

24 This issue is not just about dollars and cents. It
25 is about the health of families and the survival of children

1 in Kingston and beyond. Capping rent increases for the most
2 vulnerable members of our community is a vital start. Like
3 preventing a wildfire from spreading beyond its borders.
4 But we are still in a housing emergency and the fire needs
5 to not just be contained but put out.

6 I call on the Board to make progress towards
7 putting out that fire by passing a rent reduction of at
8 least 30 percent to counteract the outrageous increases in
9 rent that have been pushing Kingston residents into poverty.

10 The City of Kingston determines that it was
11 necessary to form this Board in order to address our housing
12 emergency and restore access to housing for Kingston's most
13 vulnerable. You have the legal authority to do exactly that
14 by instituting this 30 percent rent reduction with the
15 longest lookback period possible. And I urge you to follow
16 through on your duty by doing exactly that.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. TIERNEY: So you said if you did not have the
19 social safety network of your family, you would not be able
20 to live in our community?

21 MS. BAUS: That's right. That's why I'm moving out
22 of this community to Newburgh where I'll be paying about
23 \$300 less per month than I pay here even renting from
24 family.

25 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

1 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Any other questions?

2 Thank you so much.

3 Christian Post?

4 MR. POST: First of all, thank you very much for
5 thank you for listening to me. Thank you for inviting me.
6 Full disclosure, I do own rental properties, all right? And
7 obviously we're here because there is some sort of crisis
8 here in Kingston. Everybody wants to address this crisis
9 and I think we can all agree that there is a crisis, but I
10 think we have to really look at what the crisis is and what
11 the cause -- what the real cause -- cause and effect, supply
12 and demand.

13 Economics 101, day one, page one, paragraph one.
14 Supply and demand. When the supply is outstripped by the
15 demand, prices go up. We all know that. And it doesn't
16 matter if it's a mango or an apartment. That's what -- if
17 the demand is too great and there's not enough supply, the
18 rent is going to go up, the price will go up, okay?

19 So I think that there are two different ways that
20 we can approach this problem. We can look at this and we
21 can say, wow, the prices are too high, let's, you know,
22 let's force prices lower. Or we could say, let's increase
23 the supply. Let's make more apartments. So how do you do
24 that? Well, you offer some sort of tax break for developers
25 to come in. There's plenty of places that can still be

1 built here in the city of Kingston, in the town of Ulster.
2 You know, it's like -- and it works with apartments as it
3 does with anything else. You know, the State of California
4 wants all electric cars by 2035. Great. That sounds great.
5 The problem is nobody can afford an electric car because
6 they're 20, \$25,000 more. So what did the government do?
7 The government stepped in and said, okay. We will help
8 subsidize. We will give you a tax break if you buy an
9 electric car. That was how they decided to go about it.
10 They didn't go to the car maker and say, hey, buddy, you
11 have to make that \$25,000 less. Because -- you know why
12 they didn't do that? Because GM would have said, hey, you
13 know what? Pound sand. We're not making electric cars. We
14 can't make it. And if they did, they'd be pieces of crap.
15 So, you know, you get what you pay for. There's different
16 ways of the carrot and the stick. Use a tax incentive. I
17 agree.

18 And I've heard all the horror stories. I'm a
19 landlord. I own properties. You guys -- the stories that
20 I've heard today breaks my heart. And it sounds to me more
21 like we have a problem of scumbag landlords in Kingston
22 rather than a pricing issue. And I will wrap this up. But
23 the point is that I heard everybody talking about, oh, I got
24 mold. What are you guys doing? I mean, what are the city
25 agencies that the buildings department -- I mean, what are

1 they doing about that, you know?

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

3 MR. POST: You're welcome.

4 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I appreciate it.

5 Michael?

6 MR. TIERNEY: What percentage of your units are
7 ETPA covered homes?

8 MR. POST: Zero.

9 MR. TIERNEY: Zero? Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. POST: Yeah. I'm say. To say I'm a small
11 business owner is like ridiculous. I mean, micro business
12 owner. I don't qualify for these. But I just want to speak
13 out because I don't think everyone understands. I don't
14 think everybody understands that, you know, like for
15 instance, I pay the fuel oil on one of my buildings, it's a
16 five unit, and the oil has always been 249, 279 a gallon.
17 Well, guess what? It's now 570. That comes out of my
18 pocket. You know, it's like I'm spending \$4,000 a month to
19 heat the building. I don't think anyone understands that.
20 You know, somebody says, oh, rent should be free. Yeah,
21 rent should be free. But you know what, if you guys want,
22 put the 30 percent in but --

23 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Thank you.

24 MR. POST: -- lower taxes.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

1 MR. POST: And lower gas prices. You're welcome.

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I appreciate that.

3 Any questions?

4 MS. PUENTES: No, I was just going to ask him what
5 kind of profits he made?

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Do you want to?

7 MS. PUENTES: No:

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Okay.

9 Jonathan Bix?

10 MR. BIX: Hello, I'm Jonathan. Speaking as an
11 individual today, I've been a homeowner in Kingston for the
12 last three years and a renter in Hudson Valley for the nine
13 years before that. My understanding is that this Board in
14 this process is not supposed to be political, it's supposed
15 to be based on objective data. And to me, the objective
16 data is pointing to a 30 percent to 33 percent rent
17 decrease.

18 The best data I've seen is just from looking at
19 Zillow. You know, if you just look at it, you can clearly
20 see within the last seven years or so, rents in Kingston
21 have doubled. And in the last year of that data, it's gone
22 up by about 30 percent to 33 percent. And we can make sure
23 you get sent just the spreadsheet that list all of that and
24 profit on the graph.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Great.

1 MR. BIX: Yeah, to me that's the most objective,
2 the most recent, and the most geographic target data that we
3 have. And so it makes sense to me that that would be the
4 basis for your decision.

5 You know, saying, well, a large rent reduction
6 hasn't happened before, so we can't do it. That would be
7 being political; right? Saying elected or appointed
8 officials will be mad at us if we do this, that would be
9 political. If you were to act like it's your job to keep
10 individual landlords in business if they can only stay in
11 business or afford to do repairs by price gouging, that
12 would be being political.

13 But it's not your job to do that, your job is just
14 to be clear and objective. And to me again, the Zillow data
15 for Kingston for the last year shows 30 to 33 percent rent
16 increase. And you can get a specific actual number if
17 you -- according to that data. So to me, I hope you will
18 follow that data and let a very significant rent reduction
19 over the longest lookback period possible.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

22 MR. BROWN: You expressed that you guys are using
23 Zillow for data. They're a data marketing corporation, not
24 a real estate broker. And they also advise that they don't
25 use -- to use caution when using their data as it doesn't

1 quite reflect exactly what's going on in the community.

2 Is that a factor to renters? Is that something that --

3 MR. BIX: I mean people do --

4 MR. BROWN: They should look more.

5 MR. BIX: -- rent apartments based on Zillow. I
6 mean, if you look at other data like the American Community
7 Survey data from 2010 to 2018 it shows a really significant
8 rent increases. So, to me, if you look at Zillow data, it's
9 not significantly different with what we're seeing what the
10 US Sensus Bureau has collected. So I think it's pretty
11 clear -- I mean, if there's something else that we can find
12 that already shows Kingston's rents for the last year and in
13 an objective way you could use that. But a lot of the
14 public, we gather data that we have, it doesn't have it yet
15 for like the last year; right? So to me the Zillow date is
16 still on trend with sort of like the US Sensus Bureau
17 collections from the previous year before that to makes it
18 seem like to me it's gold, solid data.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Any other questions?

20 Thank you.

21 MR BIX: Thanks.

22 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Brahvan Ranga (phonetic)?

23 MR. TAMPONE: You got to get closer to your mouth.

24 MR. RANGA: All right. Can everyone hear me?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

1 MR. RANGA: Okay. Thank you so much for this
2 opportunity to provide public comments. And thank you so
3 much to all of the brave tenants that showed up tonight.
4 You all are the ones that are going to change history for
5 the many.

6 I'm For The Many, we organize hundreds of working
7 class Kingston tenants, from recent immigrants to students,
8 to working class families that have been living in the city
9 for generations. And housing insecurity is one of the
10 central issues we hear from them time and time again. It's
11 an all too familiar stories. Rents are unaffordable and
12 ever increasing and are severely limited housing stocks
13 makes tenants have extremely limited market power. People
14 are paying an ever increasing share of their income on rent,
15 or they're being paid forced from their homes entirely.

16 In order to address the scale of the housing crisis
17 facing Kingston tenants, in order to stabilize spiraling
18 housing market and to protect tenants in more than 1,200
19 units covered by the ETPA, this Board must adopt a
20 meaningful rent reduction when it sets rent adjustments for
21 one and two year leases and adopt the longest possible
22 lookback period when setting guidelines for fair market rent
23 appeals.

24 These proposals are the only just response to the
25 stories you've heard today from countless tenants, but it is

1 also the only reasonable action you can take in response to
2 the objective data. Every credible source shows that rents
3 in Kingston has skyrocketed in recent years and housing
4 availability is severely limited, while incomes have not
5 been able to keep up.

6 According to the Ulster County Planning Department,
7 citing data from HUD and the American Community Survey, 26.6
8 percent of Kingston renters are living in housing deemed
9 unaffordable, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their
10 income on rent. An additional nearly 30 percent of renters
11 were severely cost burdened, which means that their monthly
12 housing costs exceeded 50 percent of their monthly income.
13 That's ridiculous. And this means that according to the
14 most recent data from the Federal Government of the United
15 States, more than half of all Kingston renters live in
16 housing that's unaffordable.

17 These rapid increases have only accelerated during
18 the pandemic. According to Hudson Valley Pattern for
19 Progress, of which our friend is a member, a single person
20 making average wages in the Hudson Valley cannot afford rent
21 and modest living expenses without support. This report
22 found that the average wage of an Ulster County renter was
23 \$13 in 2022, which meant that the rent that they could
24 afford was \$717. This is far below the average market rates
25 for a one and two-bedroom apartments, which is \$1,060 and

1 \$1,364 respectively.

2 Perhaps, and most critically, according to Zillow,
3 the average rent between March 2015 and September 2022,
4 rents went up from \$970 to one \$1,930, an increase of about
5 100 percent. And these are the rents that Kingston renters
6 are seeing when they're trying to find housing. So it is
7 incredibly relevant.

8 The evidence from objective studies, private
9 listings conducted both by government and nonprofit agencies
10 reflects an spiraling crisis of housing affordability in the
11 City of Kingston.

12 Moreover, with a vacancy rate of 1.57 percent,
13 tenants have virtually no market power to escape these
14 prices. The Rent Guidelines Board must correct this crisis
15 by issuing a rent reduction, moving to freeze rent or
16 increase rent would be directly contradictory to what that
17 data reflects.

18 The data also reflects that unfair rent increases
19 have been going on for almost a decade. Reflecting the need
20 for a long lookback period. The longest possible. Such a
21 move has been urged by various policy research organizations
22 like the Community Service Society, the Legal Aid Society of
23 New York, the Hudson Valley Justice Center, the Kingston
24 Interfaith Council, and others.

25 Those that oppose such a decision are interested in

1 maximizing their own profits rather than the needs of our
2 community. The lawsuits that they have issued are trying to
3 scare you. They're trying to scare us, the renters of
4 Kingston, and they have no legal standing. A judge already
5 ruled that the lawsuit that was issued and that the vote
6 should continue and the lawsuit should be dismissed. And I
7 urge this Board to move forward.

8 Do not allow greedy corporations and corporate real
9 estate to intimidate you and shut down the democratic
10 process. This Board has a mandate from the people of
11 Kingston and your powers are enshrined in state law. You
12 have the power to move forward next week to reduce rents, to
13 install a long lookback period, to protect the renters in
14 this room, and to preserve housing affordability in this
15 city.

16 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

17 MR. TIERNEY: So, Mr. Ranga, you referred to
18 lawsuits being nonsensical. Are these lawsuits being filed
19 by tenants or by property homes?

20 MR. RANGA: They're being filed by landlords. And
21 every time a city or municipality opts into rent
22 stabilization, plenty of landlords issue these kinds of
23 lawsuits not because they have any kind of legal standing,
24 but to scare you. And I urge you not to be intimidated by
25 them.

1 MR. TIERNEY: And just to follow, to your
2 knowledge, has a lawsuit against the Rent Guidelines Board
3 ever been successful?

4 MR. RANGA: They have never been successful on
5 substantive issues, no.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Our friends at
7 DHCR can sign up to testify.

8 Any other questions?

9 MS. INOUYE: How would delaying our vote affects
10 tenants?

11 MR. RANGA: That's a great question. If this Board
12 delays the vote, that would lead to thousands of tenants in
13 ambiguity. It would allow them to be continued to be taken
14 advantage of predatory landlords. It would keep them from
15 having the corrections necessary to stay in their homes.
16 That would be a grave mistake. Tenants will lose their
17 homes if you delay this vote because it will also embolden
18 the landlords that are trying to take advantage of the
19 situation. I urge you not to capitulate to their demands.

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Anymore questions?

21 MS. SOTO: You know, I noticed in my mail today, I
22 didn't see it, but there was a notice that the landlord had
23 registered the apartment and we got a registered letter. So
24 that start's this 90-day period where we have a chance to --
25 if we delayed the vote, would that also be delayed or would

1 that just be -- would we still have to --

2 MR. RANGA: That countdown would continue. Right.
3 As soon as tenants get that registration letter, they have
4 90-days to file Fair Market Rent Appeals and get money
5 reimbursed that they lost due to rent gouging. If this
6 Board doesn't set guidelines, those tenants are lost. How
7 are they supposed to file the appeal if they don't have the
8 guidelines to do so?

9 MS. SOTO: All right. Thank you so much.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much, Brahvan.

11 MR. RANGA: Thank you.

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Phil Lerner?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Phil left.

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Oh, Phil left. Okay.

15 Barbara Hill?

16 MS. HILL: I'm Barbara Hill, Alderman Ward
17 Alderwoman --

18 MR. TIERNEY: Barbara, go a little closer to the
19 mic.

20 MS. HILL: Oh, okay. I'm sorry. I'm recovering
21 from COVID so I got myself here today.

22 Barbara Hill, Alderwoman, Ward 1, Kingston. I'm
23 also the chair of the Ulster County Community Services
24 Board, which focuses on mental health, substance use, and
25 people with disabilities in the county.

1 I just want to say I'm also a member of the
2 Kingston Housing Coalition and also serve on a standing
3 committee with Phil Lerner. We're focusing on
4 housing in the legislature, so I feel like I'm cramming
5 everything into my head that I possibly can.

6 I know the ETPA and rent stabilization is only one
7 action we can take in the city, and it's heartbreaking. I
8 have to say that I grew up a tenant and I've also lived in
9 rent stabilized apartments in the city. Being a renter
10 growing up, it was pretty scary and probably not having a
11 lot of money. Anyhow, when I ran for office, people were
12 saying, don't go to the housing developments. They're not
13 regular voters. They're transient, they're not really part
14 of the community. And that flipped me out, you know. And
15 then I try to get into the housing developments to talk to
16 people and when I kept getting run out -- I still do,
17 Fairview Gardens -- Stony Run thank God somebody here gave
18 me a map of the building. And then I figured out the front
19 door was broken, the lock for the back door. So I was able
20 to infiltrate. But it was horrible to see the conditions
21 there. Horrifying.

22 And then I started getting calls regarding the --
23 because eviction legislation we passed. It was
24 heartbreaking to have to tell people to tell people that the
25 word eviction is in that and they would have to risk going

1 through that process. And then there's not really enough
2 lawyers. So then we passed ETPA and I start getting really
3 urgent calls. Carolina was one, of these exorbitant
4 increases with threats. And I've been over there, I'll get
5 a call like an entire building has a gas leak and the four
6 women that lived in it had no way to cook and it wasn't
7 being addressed. The building -- the management kept
8 ordering the wrong parts. So I just have to say that Stony
9 Run is a particular case. I mean, I think they pretty much
10 violate a lot of basic tenant laws.

11 You know, it's hard for me to say what kind of
12 lookback or what kind of rent decrease. I'm going to trust
13 the Rent Guidelines Board. I've taken lots of notes on
14 testimony, but it is so obvious in the past two years, three
15 years, the amount of rent increase that's happening that's
16 happened in Stony Run because it's just egregious.

17 Fairview Gardens, let me just say 500 of the
18 units -- affected units are in my ward, so I've taken it
19 very seriously. Fairview Gardens people are not so much
20 concerned. They like the landlord only, you know, increased
21 50 percent -- \$50 per year. If you're on a fixed income,
22 that started adding up. So there were a few tenants there
23 that I tried to get in here, but it's challenging if people
24 come out and speak.

25 Miller's Lane also, people -- maybe that 50

1 percent, it's just -- it's not like Stony Run. Stony Run is
2 like the worst case scenario. I feel like -- you know, i
3 feel like I'm learning as much as I can. Oh, and one
4 question that came up is displacement. Like, people are
5 either finding a family member to go live with, like a
6 daughter. Some people are lucky enough to get up to the top
7 of some other list. It was unbelievable. You know, I go
8 back to the same door, weeks later, and that person's gone.
9 And they would say, oh, they had to move out because of this
10 or that. So I'm grateful that at Stony Run, they're forming
11 a tenant's association, which can -- hopefully they're more
12 powerful together to address a lot of these things.

13 But, you know, I just appreciate the opportunity to
14 speak and I've learned a lot today too.

15 Thank you, everybody that's spoken up.

16 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much, Barbara.

17 MS. HILL: Any questions?

18 MR. TIERNEY: Yeah. Thank you, Alderwoman Hill.

19 MS. HILL: Thank you.

20 MR. TIERNEY: Would you say that a significant
21 percentage of your communications with your constituents are
22 related to housing issues?

23 MS. HILL: Mostly traffic in my ward, but because I
24 was brave enough to go into all the housing developments,
25 mostly Stony Run, it's housing.

1 MR. TIERNEY: Okay. And then you said that you
2 additionally serve on the Community Services Board. Can you
3 speak to some of the difficulties of those living with a
4 mental illness for retaining and finding housing?

5 MS. HILL: Yeah, it's outrageous. It has become
6 our main -- it's risen to the top of the main issue because
7 it impacts all health. In fact, I'm an expert on behavioral
8 health and mental health but it's become secondary to
9 housing. I've been trying to learn as much as I can.

10 For people with -- oh, my brother is schizophrenia,
11 so it was quite a challenge. He wasn't on his meds. I had
12 to find a place for him. My partner wanted him homeless
13 that I learned there's, like, five different versions of
14 homeless, but I filled out every housing application, maybe
15 about nine or ten. Some were because he has a mental health
16 issue, but luckily he was over 55. I don't know how anybody
17 would know how to do this. I have three degrees and I'm
18 tenacious as a researcher, I don't know what people do.

19 And the county doesn't have a great system. It's
20 called SPOA and I've gotten my brother through it twice, and
21 it's hard for me.

22 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you so much, Alderwoman.

23 MS. HILL: Anybody else?

24 MR. TAMPONE: I just wanted to thank you and
25 Alderwoman Hirsch, I think I think might still be here, just

1 for voting for the legislation that brought us here and for
2 being involved in the process.

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Dee Grossi (phonetic).

4 MS. GROSSI: Hi. I'm Dee Grossi. I live at Stony
5 Run and have been there for 20 years, so I have seen a lot.
6 This current landlord has made my life hard in respect to
7 finances. I'm at that phase in my life where I am on a
8 fixed income and the rents go up. I was one of the tenants
9 who received an early bird special offer. My rent -- my
10 lease renews in August, so in April they sent me this offer.
11 If I signed in April, somewhere between April and May, I
12 would have an 11 percent increase. If I signed from May to
13 June, I would have a 13 percent increase. If I signed
14 somewhere from June to July, it would be 15 percent.

15 Obviously, I took the 11 percent. And it's getting
16 to the point where I don't know if I could spend another
17 year there. Currently, this is 60 percent of my income. At
18 my age I am now, I went back to work part time. Not
19 something I planned on. I certainly worked hard my whole
20 life. I'm very independent and I thought I planned well for
21 this phase of my life, but I certainly had no idea that I
22 would be dealing with landlords who just increased rents so
23 out of proportion to what the people in the area earn.

24 Now, I know you've heard people talk about the
25 garbage cost. That was 150 percent increase. I don't know

1 who negotiated that contract, but I could have done better.
2 And on an annual basis, there's 267 units in Stony Run,
3 that's \$80,100 they're collecting from tenants per year. So
4 now the rumor is that they're going to be charging \$25 for
5 parking per vehicle. So if it's just \$25 for one vehicle,
6 that'll be an additional \$80,100 a year that they're going
7 to receive from us. And then you also heard people talk
8 about the amenities fee. That's \$65. That comes out to
9 \$208,260 a year. You're talking about close to \$400,000 a
10 year.

11 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you. Thank you so much
12 for testifying.

13 MR. TAMPONE: You've been there for 20 years.

14 MS. GROSSI: Yes.

15 MR. TAMPONE: In 2019, when the city did their
16 first housing vacancy study, did -- was there any type of
17 aggressive move to try to raise the rent at that point in
18 time?

19 MS. GROSSI: Not that I recall, but I think what
20 happened at that time -- and others couldn't tell if I'm
21 right or not -- they ended up with a high vacancy and I
22 think that was intentional. And as you look around the
23 apartment complex now, we also have a lot of vacancies,
24 which has been unusual for them.

25 MR. TAMPONE: How do you -- was the management at

1 that time trying to push people out or -- how can you can
2 you frame how that high vacancy happened or do you have any
3 recollection?

4 MS. GROSSI: I think it happened because they were
5 concerned about rent control. And I've been told, but I
6 don't know if it's true, that vacancies had something to do
7 with qualification for it.

8 MR. TAMPONE: It does.

9 MS. GROSSI: So they're very smart.

10 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Grossi. So when you
11 were offered those three options, would you say that you
12 felt intimidated into taking the cheapest one?

13 MS. GROSSI: Yes, because I certainly didn't want a
14 15 percent increase in my rent.

15 MR. TIERNEY: And even this 11 percent increase,
16 that's overly burdensome for your fixed income?

17 MS. GROSSI: Yes.

18 MR. TIERNEY: And so would you favor a rent
19 reduction?

20 MS. GROSSI: Absolutely.

21 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you. And for that 11 percent
22 increase, do you see any increase in services responsiveness
23 from the property owners?

24 MS. GROSSI: No.

25 MR. TIERNEY: No?

1 MS. GROSSI: You know, I know people have mentioned
2 that they gave the kids a new play area. They didn't give
3 them a new play area. Kids had three areas in which they
4 could play, they took one away for the dog park. They have
5 another area that they say is going to be an outdoor
6 theater. And so the kids are left with one area that they
7 kind of refreshed.

8 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

9 MS. GROSSI: You're welcome.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

11 Daniel Atonna (phonetic)?

12 MR. ATONNA: Hi, everyone. My name is Daniel
13 Atonna. I'm the political coordinator of For The Many and I
14 work here in the City of Kingston at 13 Grand Street.

15 I've been canvassing the ETPA buildings to
16 encourage tenants to show up to this hearing and a lot of
17 the people that I spoke to showed up, so that was very
18 exciting. I talked to many Stony Run tenants who are
19 dealing with black mold, it's obviously not safe. While at
20 Stony Run I saw a shattered window in the entrance area. In
21 one of the buildings, there was a little kid running around
22 the building, you know, what if he stepped on the broken
23 glass or tripped and got it in his hands? That's not safe.
24 In another building, I saw a missing door knob at the
25 laundry room door. That means anyone can get inside the

1 building at anytime. That's not safe. Another building,
2 the door was locked, but the door's window was missing, so
3 anyone could just reach their hand through the window and
4 open the door. So that's a problem and it's not safe.

5 By the way, these tenants were telling me that they
6 were paying over \$2,000 a month in rent. I have photos of
7 these things I just described that I can send you. These
8 tenants don't have safe housing. They deserve a rent
9 reduction.

10 By the way, these problems don't only exist in the
11 Stony Run buildings. I know some landlords have been
12 spreading that rumor. I talked to someone at Dutch Village.
13 He said a washing machine is guaranteed in a lease, he's
14 lived there for two years and they've never fixed his
15 washing machine. If you pay for something and you don't get
16 it, you should get a refund. They deserve a rent reduction.

17 I talked to another gentleman in Dutch Village. He
18 said he's 103 years old. He told me he can't come to the
19 hearing and I said that's understandable. I think the fact
20 that he's 103 means he deserves a rent reduction, come on.
21 Apartments.com says there's only 98 available apartments in
22 the entire City of Kingston. Most of these places are
23 unaffordable. If tenants can't stay in their ETPA
24 apartments, where are they supposed to go? We want them to
25 stay in Kingston, work here, send their kids to school here.

1 To do that, they need a rent reduction.

2 And I know a study done by the Property Owners
3 Association is claiming that the vacancy rate is higher.
4 Studies by tobacco companies claim that smoking is safe.
5 You know, I think they're a little biased.

6 Our State Supreme Court Justice has already denied
7 a restraining order to block the implementation of this law.
8 I urge the Rent Guidelines Board, use your legal authority
9 to pass the largest rent reduction possible and as long a
10 lookback period as possible without delay. The tenants and
11 a majority of the landlords can not.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Mr. Atonna. It seems like
14 you've probably spoken with more ETPA tenants than any of
15 us and it seems like obviously not 1,400 are here today.
16 Did any express any feelings of intimidation or fright in
17 speaking publicly? Were they afraid to confront the
18 problems in their apartments?

19 MR. ATONNA: Yeah, there were definitely tenants,
20 who when I invited them to the hearing, they asked me, like,
21 is my landlord going to be there? You know, can I get
22 evicted for showing up and talking? There were people who
23 were definitely scared to show up.

24 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

25 MS. PUENTES: The Rent Guidelines Board received this email on

1 November 3rd, 2022.

2 "To whom it may concern or the Rent Guidelines
3 Board, my name Maria Benitez (phonetic) I currently reside
4 at 177 Fair Street, Apartment 3, in Kingston New York.

5 "My building is one of the buildings for the rent
6 control or stabilized rent under this which is owned by
7 Ithaca (phonetic) or Greystar Group, as they call
8 themselves. Since they bought the building from the
9 original owner, Neil Jacobson, they had raised my rent a
10 total of \$200. Back in 2019, they raised it \$150. And
11 then, I think, it was 2021, they raised it another \$50.

12 "I'm writing to you because my mobility has been
13 challenged as I am crutches right now, which is why I was
14 unable to attend the last couple of meetings. Please,
15 please contact me about this matter if you please.

16 "Maria Benitez."

17 CHAIRMAN KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Sierra Suris (phonetic).

18 MS. SURIS: Good afternoon, everybody. I live here
19 in Kingston. I lived on 16 John Street for five years. The
20 building was sold and bought not by the original people who
21 were supposed to be buying it, by people looking for a tax
22 break by buying this building. They then waited about three
23 months to then tell me that they were going to raise my rent
24 from \$900 to \$1,600. That is a 71-effing-percent increase.

25 When I reached out to them and brought up things

1 such as affordable housing, gentrification issue they called
2 me to strike a deal. They said that they would let me, like
3 we were homies, like we were friends, that they would charge
4 me \$1,350 for an apartment that I signed a lease when I --
5 or a notice when I originally bought it that I wouldn't eat
6 the paint because there's lead in it. That they would only
7 raise it to \$1,350 if I did not tell the other tenants in my
8 building that they were cutting this deal. Like I'm some
9 sort of goddamn class trader. I think the eff not.

10 So I would like for us to find other housing, which
11 is 50 percent of my income. I spend 50 percent. And that
12 does not include the electric. I pay for that myself. This
13 does not include my gas, I pay for that myself as well. 50
14 percent. Not to mention when I was struggling to find a new
15 apartment, I was required to send screenshots of my bank
16 account and my savings account so that they knew that if,
17 God forbid I lost my job, that I would be able to afford to
18 live there, which is bullshit. I think we can all agree to
19 that.

20 And, lastly, I would just like to say, could you
21 all imagine being so down on your luck that you didn't --
22 that you were homeless for three years and that you thank
23 God for getting out of that, to then go and wish that and
24 make sure that that happens to other people.

25 MR. LANZARONE: Yeah. I never said that, but yeah.

1 MS. SURIS: I'm pretty sure you did, sir.

2 MR. LANZARONE: Yeah, yeah.

3 MS. SURIS: I yield the rest of my time.

4 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I think you've got questions.
5 Yeah, go ahead.

6 MR. TAMPONE: So if you were sitting on this Board,
7 would you be voting for a rent increase, rent freeze, or
8 reduction?

9 MS. SURIS: I would be voting for a rent reduction
10 and also, I would be voting for open-book management where
11 there's accountability to the landlords on why they're
12 raising prices. So if you got to buy -- I get it. That
13 shits expensive, but I want to see it. Why are you
14 arbitrarily raising prices because of free capital? Free
15 market?

16 Thank you for your question.

17 MR. TAMPONE: What -- you said there's properties
18 on John Street that fall under this -- are you at 23 or 2 or
19 somewhere else?

20 MS. SURIS: I'm elsewhere.

21 MR. TAMPONE: Okay.

22 MS. SURIS: Previously at 16 John.

23 MR. TAMPONE: 16 John. Okay. I didn't hear the
24 number.

25 MS. SURIS: I'm technically in 23, so, yes.

1 MR. TIERNEY: She's my upstairs neighbor.

2 MR. TAMPONE: Oh, okay. All right. So then you
3 are in an ETPA covered building?

4 MS. SURIS: Yes.

5 MR. TAMPONE: Yeah, yeah. Okay. So when did this
6 egregious rent increase -- when was that proposed to you? I
7 didn't get the time frame.

8 MS. SURIS: That was last October of 2021.

9 MR. TAMPONE: Okay.

10 MS. SURIS: Thank you.

11 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

12 Rosario Lara (phonetic)?

13 MS. LARA: Hi. I'm Rosario Lara and thank you for
14 this opportunity to talk to all of you. I have been renting
15 all my life since I arrived to New York State. And the
16 situation for me and my family became kind of dangerous and
17 very -- in the sense that the rent was increased
18 dramatically. 10 percent each year since the pandemic
19 starts.

20 Right at the time when many people lose their job.
21 First -- second to the person of those who say that this
22 problem can be can be resolved by looking for a job --
23 getting a job, they have to have in consideration that right
24 now there is an inflation of 8.5 percent. So the person who
25 was living on the streets, I'm sorry for him, but I will

1 ask, how was the inflation in the country? Because before
2 the pandemic, the inflation was less than one percent.

3 Second, we are talking about not the market,
4 because the market -- the market doesn't care about life.
5 We are here because we are fighting for life. And I should
6 be over that (inaudible) because we have the life, to have a
7 good -- I mean, we have the right to have a good life first.
8 And we are here because we are fighting for our children,
9 for the future. It's not only for us. I have two daughters
10 and I want for them a better future. Much better than mine.

11 The the third thing is that we never should compare
12 life to profit. And to the person who said that he find a
13 job and could redo his life, good for him. Good for him.
14 But right now salaries are not enough to support a family
15 and this is a social problem. This is a structural
16 problem. This is a problem for the system. And this
17 product should be resolved in community. It's a social
18 product, so it requires a social solution. Private solution
19 is not enough.

20 So that's it.

21 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Lara. You said your
22 rent rose 10 percent each year since 2019. What percentage
23 of your income goes to your housing costs?

24 MS. LARA: It is more about 50 percent. And we
25 have to be responsible for paying the electricity, gas,

1 internet, water, and sewer. And for me to be able to help
2 with the situation, I have to get two jobs. Is not like
3 some developers and their like get a job, work. What we are
4 doing? We are working. We are working more than one job.
5 We are not lazy people that want the government or give us
6 something for free. We are here because we are fighting and
7 I'm very grateful when I look around the room and see this
8 because we are here fighting for life.

9 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you. So that, for all intent
10 and purposes, is a 20 percent increase since 2019. Have you
11 gotten a 20 percent increase in services to your apartment
12 since 2019?

13 MS. LARA: Yeah, we are paying more for
14 electricity, we are paying more for water, we are paying
15 more for sewer.

16 MR. TIERNEY: But has your landlord provided
17 anything to justify that?

18 MS. LARA: No, no, no. And not only that, when the
19 pandemic start, we receive a letter from the landlord saying
20 that instead of paying directly to them through a money
21 order or a check, they request us to give them our bank
22 account, the bank and the routing number because they will
23 take it out -- directly out of our money. So they are not
24 only happy to raise our rents, but they are controlling our
25 lives because they have control of our income so most

1 of us sign up that paper, the new stipulation in the
2 contract because we are completely vulnerable. Because we
3 knew that if we didn't sign that, this new piece of
4 legislation on the contract, on the lease we will be -- you
5 know, next year we will not get a renewal and there is no
6 place to go. So what else we can do?

7 And second, we tried to organize an organization in
8 our complex apartment, that right was denied because we
9 received (inaudible). So they were violating our right of
10 free organization. And so we are completely -- we are not
11 protected by anyone.

12 MR. TIERNEY: And if you don't mind, what complex
13 do you live in?

14 MS. LARA: Well, I will not -- I don't want to say
15 the name. I come from New Paltz and I know this is for
16 Kingston, but I'm here because I would like that this --
17 that this fight cover many of the whole state. So I'm here
18 supporting Kingston because I know that this fight, this
19 trouble has to be -- is a social one. So each of us should
20 support each other.

21 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you so much, Ms. Lara.

22 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Teresa Green?

23 MS. GREEN: All right. I got notes. First of all,
24 I'm Teresa Green, I live 305 Hurley Avenue, Apartment 13G
25 along with my husband Joseph. So I want to read the letter

1 about the rent increase. My rent increase situation and
2 then I want to address four comments that I heard here
3 today, okay?

4 All right. Dear City of Kingston Rent Guidelines
5 Board, I'm Teresa Green. I live at Stony Run at the
6 Stockade, 305 Hurley Avenue, Apartment 13G, in Kingston with
7 my husband, Joseph. I attended the hearing on October 25th
8 at the Kingston City Hall. It was held in the Council
9 Chambers regarding the guideline rates of rent adjustments
10 for housing accommodations within this jurisdiction for
11 leases commencing between August 1st, 2022 and September
12 30th, 2023. The guidelines was a determination of bear
13 market rent appeals pertaining to housing accommodations
14 within this jurisdiction.

15 Looking back over the past five years, our rate
16 increases were as follows:

17 November 1st, 2017 - at Stony Run Company, under
18 Larrymore Organization Management. My rent was \$1,215.00.
19 No trash fees.

20 November 1st, 2018 - it still remained Stony Run
21 Company, under Larrymore Organization Management. My rent
22 increased to \$1,245. No trash fees. And the total increase
23 of the base rent was \$30.

24 November 1st, 2019 through October 31st, 2021 we
25 were give a two-year lease. It was Stony Run Company, under

1 E&M Management. The rent was increased \$1,325, plus trash
2 fees of \$10 which equaled -- brought our rent to \$1,335.
3 Increasing our base rent by \$53. And the total increase
4 \$90. On July 1st, 2020, E&M Management added a Storage Unit
5 Fee. The letter actually said that te increase was -- the
6 fee was \$20 but they said I had a larger corner unit and I
7 had to pay \$40. And this was an amenity that was inclusive
8 in our rent since 2009 when I first moved in to further
9 increasing our rent was \$130 which lead to \$1,375.

10 November 1st, 2021, Kingston Village, under
11 Greystar Management. Rent was \$1,378 increasing our base
12 rent \$53. Trash fee \$25 brought us to \$1,403. An increase
13 of \$78. No storage unit fee at this time.

14 And currently, November 1st, 2022, Stony Run at the
15 Stockade, under Lincoln Property Company management
16 increased the rent to \$1,537. Increasing our base rent to
17 \$159 plus trash fees \$25. Amenities fees \$65 which there's
18 no specific details on what the amenities are, which would
19 bring us to \$1,627. A total increase \$224.

20 The November 1st rent increase is an 11.6 percent
21 increase of the base rent. It is imperative that this Board
22 set a fixed percentage for rent increases so that we can
23 calculate our increases and give us the opportunity, in the
24 future, to choose to stay in our apartments or prepare to
25 move.

1 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much, Teresa.

2 MS. GREEN: Okay.

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Are there any questions?

4 MR. TAMPONE: I just want to thank you for being
5 very specific with your details.

6 MS. GREEN: Okay. And I know that my time was up,
7 but the gentleman in the corner --

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Sorry. I think we really
9 can't.

10 MS. GREEN: Okay.

11 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: But I would encourage you to
12 send to the Board's email address the remainder of the
13 testimony that you didn't get a chance to read.

14 MS. GREEN: Okay.

15 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Because I think we would like
16 to read it.

17 MS. PUENTES: I have a question, Teresa.

18 MS. GREEN: Yes.

19 MS. PUENTES: Was water and sewage always a part of
20 the rent?

21 MS. GREEN: Yes.

22 MS. PUENTES: It always was?

23 MS. GREEN: Yes.

24 MS. PUENTES: It's just a separate fee. Okay. I
25 just was curious about that. I know the other fees have

1 been added on.

2 MR. TAMPONE: Okay. Can you clarify that? You
3 paid extra for water and sewage the entire time or that's a
4 new --

5 MS. GREEN: The entire time.

6 MR. TAMPONE: That was a separate charge?

7 MS. GREEN: It was a separate charge, right. But I
8 just count it as a utility because it wasn't part of the
9 base rent.

10 MR. TAMPONE: Okay.

11 MS. PUENTES: Is that a metered or is -- is that
12 metered? Do you have meter? And it says that your
13 apartment uses that much?

14 MS. GREEN: Absolutely not. There's one meter to
15 the building and I guess whatever numbers that they get from
16 the water department for the usage of the building, they
17 split it. I guess if there's eight people in a building, we
18 all are paying the same amount for water use. Or they
19 change the percentage based on how many people live in your
20 apartment, because they did ask me how many was there and
21 then told me -- I can't remember now the percentage of what
22 the water cost would be for -- at the time there was three
23 of us. Our daughters graduated college and went on. When
24 there was two of us I went and asked them to reduce it, they
25 did. And so how they're actually figuring this out is about

1 the same as we know about why some people got 20, 30, and 40
2 percent increases. There's just no cohesion.

3 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Arlene, that was the
4 majority of the question I was going to ask was yours.

5 But you just mentioned that they just dropped some
6 of the charges when you asked. Would you consider that
7 arbitrary?

8 MS. GREEN: Absolutely. Because -- yes, I would.
9 They -- here we've heard all these people talk about the
10 different increases that they had. I mean, I didn't
11 finished my testimony, but in three years, my rent's going
12 to be \$2,600, which is a 13 -- a \$1,000 increase. Yeah.
13 And updated, we went to visit the owner of Stony Run
14 yesterday. It was five of us and all five of us are in this
15 room. And so some would say it was kind of like a roll up;
16 right? We rolled up on them yesterday, okays? So we
17 learned a lot. We don't know where all the truths are, but
18 we learned a lot about what's actually going on with them.

19 Yeah, so one thing that they said is that they
20 reached out when they came to buy the building. They went
21 to the Common Council to get -- make it affordable housing.

22 Correct me, Eric, if I'm wrong. Right?

23 They went to the Common Council to try to get
24 formality and they were shot down. Right. That it was
25 voted down. That after was -- he was very receptive to --

1 he explained that the rent increases are driven by lender.
2 That's what he told us. The rent increase is driven by the
3 lender. And he said that the lender's concern is that they
4 can pay their mortgage. And right now, Stony Run is in such
5 disarray that they created rent increases so that the
6 mortgage could be covered and that the work could be done.
7 And they were only given in their loan to renovate \$3
8 million, okay? They cannot -- they if we pass this thing,
9 which I'm hoping that we do, and then he can do whatever he
10 needs to do to go back to the council to get affordable
11 housing, whatever, everybody's got to make an adjustment.
12 He said that the rent increase -- he really didn't have any
13 cohesiveness. The problems that he was -- actually, he said
14 he would fail; right? He said he would fail and lose on his
15 investment because of this issue with Stony Run. He got
16 ripped off from the previous management company. They stole
17 stuff, the empty apartments that were addressed here, he
18 said that the empty apartments -- right, some of them is
19 because the management company came along that they had -- I
20 think it was Greystar -- it was Greystar was taking part
21 from -- was it E&M? From parts from other buildings -- or
22 other apartments to fix other apartments, which rigged them
23 completely unlivable. These are things that we found out
24 yesterday talking to face-to-face with the owner of Stony
25 Run.

1 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

2 I would encourage the owner of Stony Run to write
3 us a note for the official Kingston Rent Guideline Board.

4 MS. GREEN: He is in favor of the Rent Guidelines
5 Board; am I correct?

6 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

7 MS. GREEN: He is in favor of it, all right?

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I would very much appreciate
9 those words coming from him. Great. Thank you so much. I
10 really appreciate it.

11 MS. GREEN: You're welcome.

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Charlotte Lloyd? Is
13 Charlotte here? Yes. Awesome.

14 MS. LLOYD: Yeah. Hi. I'm Charlotte. I've lived
15 in Stony Run since February 2021. I am 25 years old. All
16 I've ever wanted was a home of my own. I looked for years
17 to find somewhere to live. Even with two incomes and a
18 budget of \$12,000, it was damn near impossible to find
19 anywhere to live.

20 We were lucky enough to catch Stony Run the day it
21 changed hands and snagged a much lower rate than what
22 they're advertising now. And it's almost impossible to find
23 housing in Kingston. All my friends either live with
24 parents, leave town, or are in massive debt. Every year the
25 rent goes up even though nothing changes at the complex.

1 Our rent has increased 10 percent with nothing to show for
2 it. I've spent many days and nights worrying about how long
3 we have before we have nowhere to live since every year they
4 decide they're going to increase the rent. Every time
5 they're allowed to, they will because they want more money.
6 And it seems like the safety of the tenants doesn't seem to
7 matter to them either based on their actions.

8 It's extremely difficult to make enough money with
9 my health issues, but it just keeps going up. College,
10 travel, personal projects are not an option. Everyone's
11 just worrying about keeping a roof over their head. My rent
12 is 60 percent of my income right now. That's not including
13 anything. I'm here asking for a rent reduction and I ask
14 you not to delay your vote on Wednesday. All these families
15 can't afford it and all we need is a home, a roof, a floor,
16 somewhere to place ourselves.

17 We ask for a 30 percent rent reduction and the
18 longest lookback period possible to help right the wrongs
19 and get people back on their feet so we can live our lives.

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: And Caitlin Plummer
21 (phonetic)?

22 MS. PLUMMER: I wasn't expecting to testify. I'm
23 here with my partner and I actually live in New York City,
24 but I'm an urban planning student and I'm hoping that I can
25 shed some light on the experience that we had with ETPA in

1 New York and, more broadly, to touch on of some the points
2 that other folks have made.

3 So we ETPA in New York since 1974, as other folks
4 have mentioned, and there have been really major benefits
5 that have been pointed out to the program. As rent had
6 increased astronomically in cities like New York and this
7 data is from the Community Service Society, it increases
8 integration in neighborhoods that have become increasingly
9 unaffordable otherwise, so there is a kind of a impact on
10 integration without further government involvement just
11 through the rent regulation program, people have been able
12 to stay in communities that have gentrified. I know a lot
13 of people that are only able to remain in the neighborhood
14 where they currently live because they had a rent-regulated
15 apartment. And that is a key thing that is keeping people
16 in their communities.

17 Furthermore, rent regulation increases stability,
18 which increases community, health, and like actually gives
19 people a sense of long-term community. When people are not
20 struggling to figure out where their housing is going to
21 come from at the end of their current lease, they feel like
22 they can actually -- that have stay where they live. It's
23 not a place that they can only stay until their lease ends
24 and then they have to look somewhere else.

25 As an unregulated tenant in New York City, I know

1 that I will not likely be able to stay in my apartment after
2 my lease is up and I'm assuming that tenants in Kingston
3 have the same experience.

4 Furthermore, to talk about what Rebecca was
5 mentioning earlier about vacancy rates in the City of
6 Syracuse have a test of 10 -- and this data is also from the
7 Community Service Society -- Syracuse has a vacancy rate of
8 10percent, which is five times higher than Kingston's
9 vacancy rate and the average tenancy rent burden is
10 approximately 40 percent of income, which would be -- seem
11 to be a severe rent -- I guess not a severe, but somewhere
12 between a by rent burden and a severe rent burden.

13 We have an affordable housing crisis and as long as
14 the market is the key driver of where housing is coming from
15 and how housing is produced, we will continue to have major
16 discrepancies between what people can afford and the housing
17 that is offered to them. The large experimentation and
18 actually diverging from that reliance was public housing but
19 the federal government systemically defunded that. And the
20 disinvestment that we're facing in our communities is not
21 because of programs like rent control. It's because the
22 federal government and conservatives and other figures have
23 dis-invested from programs like public housing that provide
24 long-term stability. Not because we're getting people the
25 rare opportunity to stay in their communities for a long

1 period of time.

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

3 MR. TIERNEY: Not a question, but a comment. I
4 appreciate it when a city resident comes and gives public
5 comment rather than rents an empty apartment.

6 MS. PLUMMER: (Inaudible) from Hunter College. I
7 am a current Urban Student at Hunters. That was -- I
8 appreciate that.

9 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

10 Yu Pha Lwin ?

11 MS. LWIN: Hi. Can you guys hear me?

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Come a little bit closer to
13 the mic.

14 MS. LWIN: Okay. My name is Yupha Lwin and I'm a
15 community organizer with Citizen Action. I wasn't actually
16 planning on speaking today. I spent all summer knocking on
17 doors in ETPA covered buildings and I didn't want to take
18 away from people who were coming out to speak.

19 But earlier today I heard two comments from
20 landlord representatives that are actually incorrect and I
21 wanted to address him with the empathy that he lacked
22 towards tenants right now. However, I know the Board has
23 said that you guys want to be addressed and that I cannot
24 address the public crowd, so I'm going to try my best to do
25 that here.

1 When the landlord rep was up here a few minutes
2 ago, he spoke about his time being on the streets and being
3 unhoused as a validation on why he thinks he's qualified to
4 speak out in support of landlords. I'm really sorry that
5 happened to him and nobody should have to experience
6 homelessness in the richest state in the richest country in
7 the world. However, people would not be homeless if they
8 had the ETPA protections and the rent reduction that the
9 people in Kingston are calling for today.

10 Sorry. The City of Kingston currently has a
11 vacancy rate of 1.8 percent and the average rent burden is
12 over 50 percent. If we don't reduce rents now we're only
13 going to further the homelessness issue in Kingston. People
14 will be placed out of their communities and they will have
15 nowhere to go because there are no apartments to rent
16 because we have a 1.8 percent vacancy.

17 Also, landlords who have spoken today as to
18 economics, supply and demand, and new builds. I want to
19 bring up the fact that landlords in Kingston have bought
20 buildings and complexes -- entire complexes with hundreds of
21 units for a few hundred thousand and then rented individual
22 units for \$1,400 to \$2,000. The issue right now in Kingston
23 is not the lack of new builds or the cost of maintaining a
24 complex or the alleged nonexistent high mortgages landlords
25 of these complexes face. It's the real landlords and the

1 opposition that landlords present when people demand better.

2 Some representatives today have cited the lack of
3 salary increases but landlord associations are the biggest
4 lobbyists against minimum wage in New York. You cannot say
5 that you can't afford to charge less for rent and then
6 advocate against increases that would allow people to pay
7 for the apartment (inaudible).

8 As the woman before me has stated housing
9 insecurity affects people in all patches of their life, not
10 having a permanent address which will happen to Kingston
11 tenants if we don't reduce rents, makes it impossible to get
12 a job. You can't fill out an application if you don't have
13 like an address, you can't get a bank account with an
14 address and that severely impacts your possibility to rent
15 and to buy a home.

16 Homelessness exacerbates serious health issues.
17 Having to worry about whether or not you have a bed to go
18 home to affects the way our students do in schools. Like
19 not reducing rents would further harm Kingston tenants and
20 they don't deserve that. They've been through hell and back
21 with the gentrification that they've experienced throughout
22 COVID and I implore you guys to listen to the tenant demands
23 of reducing rent and of getting them as far a lookback as
24 possible.

25 And to all the tenants here, I am so, so proud and

1 inspired to see the solidarity and the joy that you guys
2 bring to this fight. I know how hard it is to demand better
3 and I'm so happy to see this.

4 Thank you so much.

5 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Lwin for speaking.
6 What would you foresee as the consequences of us deciding on
7 a zero percent rental adjustment or a freeze?

8 MS. LWIN: I think freezing rent is not an option.
9 Like, right now, people can't afford to live. People here
10 who have spoken up that their running out of money, just
11 freezing rents doesn't do anything to fix the issues that
12 they face. And it's only -- I guess it's only pausing an
13 issue that's going to drastically increase in the future.
14 If you don't pause -- sorry -- if you don't reduce rents
15 now, then people will be homeless in the next year. And
16 then we're going to have to address that and that's not
17 okay.

18 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Charles Sanchis?

20 MR. SANCHIS: Hi. My name is Charles Sanchez. I'm
21 a tenant at Dutch Village, located at 500 Washington Avenue.
22 I'm going to keep this brief.

23 First, I'd like to thank everybody for coming on a
24 Saturday and making the time to be here. You clearly have
25 enough testimony from everybody and I think it's pretty

1 evident that rent has been increasing drastically over the
2 past several years. When there's drastic times, it calls
3 for drastic measures. Just because you may -- or if you do
4 move to deciding a rent decrease and a significant lookback,
5 that doesn't mean it's going to decimate housing. Tenants
6 still have to apply. It doesn't mean that every tenant in
7 every building that's covered by ETPA is actually going to
8 apply. I'm sure there are landlords that own properties
9 where there are tenants covered by ETPA that may very well
10 not apply for one reason or another.

11 Because the lawsuit has been filed against the
12 Board and that does not stop the period of 90-day clock
13 ticking from the time a tenant receives their registration.
14 Clearly, there was thought behind that strategy. If you
15 don't decide now, you're caving. And, unfortunately,
16 there's a large percentage of lawsuits that are filed
17 without merit. Unfortunately, it takes a long time to
18 determine that. It may not resolve itself quickly, which is
19 all the more reason to not to stall and to decide.

20 In terms of the lookback period, it's probably
21 worthy to lookback not only beyond when the pandemic
22 started, but going back to 2015 and as people have testified
23 when rent started significantly increasing in Kingston.

24 In terms of a percentage, I believe tenants have
25 provided leases covering various years. And just looking at

1 that hard data, regardless of Zillow or other data sets you
2 may have, the actual tenants leases, what percentages have
3 those gone up? Taking that into consideration to look at,
4 is 30 percent reasonable? Is 40 percent reasonable? Is 20
5 percent reasonable? I think collectively you guys will be
6 capable of coming up with that decision.

7 So I thank you and that's all I had to say.

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Okay. Any questions?

9 Thank you.

10 Ray Soto?

11 MR. SOTO: Hi, everyone. Hi. I did testify the
12 last time and I'm going to testify again. I think it's
13 important for the voices to be heard, even if it's
14 duplicated. I came from New York City, took a long time
15 there and we were in a situation where we needed to look for
16 housing because our rent stabilized apartment was already
17 taking 50 percent of my income. So we have friends and
18 relatives that live up near in Kingston, so we figured --
19 let's look for an apartment.

20 One of the first places that we saw was Sunset Park
21 or somewhere in Ulster and it was like right next to all
22 these power plants and everything. And I said, no, we don't
23 want to live right next to all this electrical stuff. But
24 the person who showed us that apartment sent us to 305
25 Hurley. Yay. So we saw the apartment there and of course,

1 you know it's -- for us, it seemed reasonable because it was
2 cheaper than our apartment in New York City. However, just
3 that the apartments were not really well-maintained and
4 there were things that were kind of very old about the
5 apartment, you know rugs and -- but we still moved in.

6 One of the things they told us is, I said, look,
7 can we at least replace the rug and he said, well, you can't
8 touch anything. You can't paint, you can't change the
9 kitchen counters, you can't paint anything. You have to
10 leave the apartment the way it is. So if tenants had
11 problems and they went and fixed something in their unit --
12 and I used to do that in New York City, by the way -- I
13 could do that and I could fix it. But they said, if you
14 change that rug, you're going to have to take it out and put
15 the rug back, originally it was there if you move out. I
16 said, oh my God. Okay.

17 But the thing is this is that what I saw was in New
18 York City, it was a rent stabilized apartment. We had one
19 percent for one year, two percent for two years. We weren't
20 offered two years, we were offered one year, which is the
21 strategy of the landlords in these complexes to keep
22 compounding the rent; right? Because annually it keeps
23 increasing. So we took the one-year and all right. That
24 was it. So that was the price that they set for the
25 apartment, we never had an ability to look at what that

1 apartment was renting prior to the prior tenant, which is
2 something that I think will get through the RGB where
3 there'll be record keeping and apartment rents will be
4 tracked and so we didn't have that opportunity. So we took
5 the apartment and then the next year Greystar came on board
6 and they gave me this renewal letter that it was going to be
7 10 percent higher. And then all of a sudden I said, oh, so
8 one of the things I tried to do, which I work with
9 landlords, is I negotiate; right? I'm a tenant, I said,
10 listen, this looks too much. We negotiated at 7.5 percent.
11 I took it.

12 Then Stony Run came on board. They -- I got the --
13 I call it the poison letter; right? It says, oh my God,
14 they want to raise my rent 18 percent for one year. And I
15 said what about giving me a two year? He says we're not
16 giving two years. And he says, look, if you don't sign by
17 the 20th of August -- and I received a letter on the 6th of
18 August, if I don't want to sign by then it's going to go up
19 30 percent. And I said, wow, I've never heard of this. So
20 I think this is where we start --

21 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

22 MR. SOTO: -- mobilizing and we started pushing and
23 that's where we are now.

24 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you so much.

25 MR. TIERNEY: When you received that letter, did

1 you feel intimidated by your landlord?

2 MR. SOTO: Of course I did. I felt intimidate and
3 I think that's we're here, the mobilization of creating that
4 tenant's organization because we all have something in
5 common and I just think that we need to set a baseline rate
6 so we can build up on that.

7 So I think the 30 percent reduction and the
8 lookback, it's critical. And the RGB Board needs to go back
9 2018, 17, pre-COVID pandemic to find out how these increases
10 were being provided -- given by the landlords, you know, for
11 the tenants.

12 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

13 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

14 Justin Nemon?

15 MR. NEMON: Hello. My name is Justin Nemon. I'm
16 the organizing director at For the Many. So, yeah, I mean,
17 the last few years, you know, we've worked closely with
18 tenants in Kingston and really throughout the Hudson Valley.
19 The constant eviction, to address the crisis of Airbnb's
20 buying our housing stock, and most recently, despite today,
21 to reduce rent for our tenants here in Kingston covered by
22 ETPA.

23 My coworkers and fellow tenants have sort of spoken
24 at length about why we need a large rent reduction and a
25 long lookback period, but really what I'm here to do today

1 is to speak about my experience working with tenants leading
2 up to this hearing today.

3 So in the last few weeks and months I've been
4 working and organizing with tenants at Stony Run, Dutch
5 Village, and you know throughout the city. And I've heard
6 many of the horror stories that we all have heard here
7 today. I don't need to repeat them.

8 So last week we had the first meeting of the 305
9 Hurley Tenant Union which is at Stony Run. It's a lot of
10 the organizing committees here, we had dozens of people
11 attend. We created a list of demands which we turned into a
12 petition. Yesterday, members from the organizing committee
13 of that -- and I went to the -- as to resource mentioning we
14 went to their headquarters in Beacon and brought the
15 position directly to them.

16 This was necessary because middle management has
17 been essentially avoiding them and not answering questions
18 for many months. And at first they were quite resistant
19 since it's their claim that they were middlemen because the
20 real owners were the bank and not them. So I'm sure that's
21 what every homeowner thinks about their house.

22 So after hearing the powerful stories from tenants,
23 some of which are in this room, landlords did actually make
24 some commitments to us. We had over an hour long
25 conversation, so I just want to read those commitments to

1 you all.

2 So, firstly, they committed to assessing all of the
3 specific problems that we have collected from tenants and
4 using their remaining maintenance funds to directly address
5 those concerns. They committed to meeting with tenants
6 monthly, on site, at Stony Run. And they committed that
7 they would abide by whatever this Board decided to do. They
8 said they supported (inaudible). They said they do not
9 support the lawsuit that's being currently -- that's
10 challenging the existence of this very Board.

11 And so I think we've heard today at length about
12 these specific landlords; right? And how badly they treated
13 their tenants. And even they are unwilling to associate
14 themselves with Rich Lanzarone or the lawsuit; right?
15 They're from the Hudson Valley Properties Association;
16 right? Not to attack him as an individual, but he is
17 plaintiff on the lawsuit that we are discussing today.

18 So I'm sorry if I broke your rule. So I think, in
19 short, if even the largest landlords within the entire set
20 of units that you all are trying to decide is supportive of
21 what your actions are, including a rent reduction, and I
22 asked to not very specifically and we have it on video and
23 we can send it to you and we will get it in writing from him
24 if necessary; right? If even he is on board with that, then
25 I think you have no reason to take this lawsuit seriously.

1 You should vote for a large rent reduction. You should vote
2 for the longest lookback period and you should hold that
3 vote this Wednesday, November 9th.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: No questions, but yes, please
6 send us that video on Twitter.

7 MR. NEMON: I will. It is currently on Twitter,
8 you can find it, but we will send it to you.

9 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

10 I don't have any other sign-in sheets. Oh, I would
11 love another sign in sheet that has your name on it or we
12 can just come up and write your name down.

13 MR. NEMON: Thank you so much.

14 MS. SCHNEIDER: I thought I was signed up. I
15 thought I had signed up to give testimony. It was my
16 understanding I was on the list.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I mean, did you -- well, the
18 list was here. Did you sign on here?

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Are any of these you?

20 MS. SCHNEIDER: No, I didn't sign this one. SO I
21 wasn't given the list.

22 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Okay. Is there another list
23 in the back of the room?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There's another one here.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Perfect. I would

1 love if you would testify now.

2 MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you, Cheryl.

4 MS. SCHNEIDER: My name is Cheryl Schneider. I
5 lived in Ulster County in the late 70's and I came back in
6 1996. But for over 25 years I was a tenant. For many of
7 those years I was a tenant in New York City. Thank God for
8 the Rent Guidelines Board, because that meant that my
9 landlord can only raise my rent just so much. It also meant
10 I had a lease and it had to be legal. They couldn't do
11 things to me that they're doing here in Kingston.

12 I think the 1974 thing is because the law was
13 written from New York City. We have to change that law. I
14 know the Rent Guidelines Board can't do that, but there's a
15 lot of housing stock in other parts of the state that are
16 much newer. I think it's absolute -- and I own a house now.
17 I was lucky enough. I'm a white educated woman, I'm pretty
18 darn articulate, and I know my rights and I negotiate with
19 landlords because I'm a business -- I also own a business.
20 Not a business making so much money that possibly I can. A
21 business so I can live.

22 I know most people in business have a different
23 philosophy. And I know about 25 years ago, the house --
24 movement with all the gurus, and the seminars, how to buy
25 houses, how to put lipstick on a pig and sell them for twice

1 as much, how to terrorize your tenants. And now it's gotten
2 into the commercial realms. You can't even -- some people
3 don't even know who their landlord is. It's a management
4 company, after management company. I think it's outrageous.

5 First of all, extracting expenses as fees that were
6 originally parts of leases is probably -- should be illegal.
7 If the Rent Guidelines Board can do that -- do something,
8 you know, revert that back, get those service -- so called
9 services. Luxury trash removal. You know anything was
10 added that all the tenants didn't agree to, roll that back.
11 Put that back in the rent.

12 Now I want this rent rollback as far as we possibly
13 go for as long a lookback as it can possibly have. As far
14 as I'm concerned, 15 years ago, the rents were too high. 20
15 years ago rents were too high. I told my nieces, they call me their
16 aunty, I know them from before they were married, they left
17 the region because they could not afford to get married, buy
18 a house, and raise a family. This is going back 15, 20
19 years. Endlessly, there's a house next to me, my neighbors
20 just told me two weeks ago, they got to go. They got family
21 in Ohio. They've been looking for a place for over two and
22 a half years, they have a baby now, they can't do it.

23 I think it's outrageous. First of all, when we do
24 this, we destabilize our communities. People have to
25 completely go somewhere else. They leave the city, they

1 leave the county, they leave the state to find housing. To
2 find housing. Housing is human right. People shouldn't
3 have to hurt put themselves out on a limb and pay everything
4 they can possibly afford to raise or earn just to have a
5 roof over their head. It's outrageous.

6 Raising rents without repairs or -- violations is
7 also a problem. Is that it?

8 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: That's it. Thank you so
9 much.

10 MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay.

11 MR. TIERNEY: Cheryl, thank you so much for all the
12 work you do in our community and for largely being
13 responsible for making the UCAT free.

14 MS. SCHNEIDER: I -- no, no, no.

15 MR. TIERNEY: Could you speak to --

16 MS. SCHNEIDER: That was done because of community
17 organizing tenants. Tenants, if your landlords do what the
18 Rent Guidelines Board says and (inaudible) you organize, you
19 go on rent strikes, you don't have another (inaudible).
20 Yeah, I lived there when they paid five year olds to collect
21 the crack vials up and down the neighborhood. The chop shop
22 on the corner is now with some cooking heroin is now a
23 (inaudible).

24 MR. TIERNEY: So could you speak to the sort of
25 consequences of burdensomely high rents on our communities?

1 MS. SCHNEIDER: Oh, my God. Oh, my God. First of
2 all, lots of people talked about the stress. It's not just
3 emotional stress, it's physical stress. People get sick
4 from physical stress. Some of the hugest stressors are loss
5 of a loved one, people die because of separation. Moving,
6 having to move and not having a place to live and not
7 knowing where your next movement could possibly be. That's
8 huge.

9 But what happens when there's -- when people can't
10 afford they have to come and go, is we lose our community
11 safety. We lose the village that is our communities. We
12 need to take care of each other and look out for each other.
13 Like, you know, mothers know if the neighbor's kids are into
14 no good kind of thing. But when we have communities where
15 we're all strangers to each other, we keep moving around, we
16 lose community safety. We lose community integrity. We
17 lose ability to be -- (inaudible). They kind of want to us
18 to game it so we're all against each other and that's what
19 happens. I mean, I can't believe I'm so, so gifted that I
20 have a home. But I want you to know, if I had to pay a rent
21 right now, like the rents I'm hearing about Kingston, I
22 would be homeless. I'd be homeless. And people don't have
23 cars anymore because they're paying their rent. I have
24 several friends who are like car-less and they're in their
25 60's, 70's, 80's. How are they supposed to buy a new car?

1 Any car? So what we're doing is we're totally, totally
2 extracting from people's labor, from people's bodies, from
3 people's well-being, so that some people can live off of
4 their tenants. When you buy real estate, we buy commercial
5 real estate, the idea is you hold it, you improve it, it
6 increases over time, and then you sell it. But somewhere
7 this things flipped. Where now landlords expect that
8 they're going to have high lifestyle not only in real
9 estate, but now we're all going to support how they live.
10 You know as well, we're going to put their kids through
11 college, we're going to make sure they all have dental work.
12 You know but that's not what owning real estate was about in
13 America. Something flipped in the last 20 years or
14 something.

15 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you so much.

16 MS. SCHNEIDER: And I did not bring free fairs.
17 The community did that.

18 Thank you very much.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: That is the end of -- sorry.
20 Other people who are left to speak, yeah. Come and write
21 down your name on the sign-in sheet. I appreciate it.

22 Do you want to start by telling us your name?

23 MR. PICKETT: Of course, my name is my name is
24 David Pickett (phonetic). I'm in a tenant at 305 Hurley
25 Avenue, Stony Run Apartments. I'd like to thank the folks

1 for inviting me to speak. I saw on your live feed. I
2 appreciate that. And I am here to call you folks for a 30
3 percent rent reduction and the longest lookback period
4 possible.

5 Very briefly. I'm a father of four. I work an
6 honest 40 hour a week job for \$20 an hour -- that's \$21 an
7 hour. That's \$5 above the \$15 minimum that progressive
8 petitioned for. My girlfriend. She works as a direct
9 support professional for the ARC for \$14 and change an hour.
10 So she's almost at that benchmark.

11 Our rent with the trash removal that they have now
12 is \$1,408. We do not make enough to pay this and survive.
13 You know, we like to feed our kids, put gas in the car,
14 occasionally go out and do something nice as a family. I'm
15 here today because I find -- I was following the live tweets
16 and I find the comments of some of the landowners in this
17 area frankly discussing. I'm not interested in what makes
18 you puke. I'm not interested in what you think the Magna
19 Carta does for you.

20 What I am interested in is putting a roof over my
21 head, for my kids, for a fair price, not trying not to have
22 to break my back working two jobs to do it. That's
23 ridiculous. This is America. We are supposed to be better
24 than that. I demand that (inaudible) 30 percent rent
25 reduction, bare minimum, and the longest lookback period

1 possible.

2 I stand in solidarity with my tenants. I look
3 forward to speaking to this gentleman as soon as possible.
4 I think we're gonna be great friends. And I want to thank
5 you guys for giving me the opportunity to speak. And I just
6 I really think that you guys need to have our backs on this
7 and I would appreciate if you took action as soon as
8 possible.

9 Thank you.

10 And just to clarify --

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can we have a 10 minute
12 break after this?

13 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If this is going to go on
15 much longer.

16 MR. PICKETT: And just to clarify too, I'm not --
17 how I feel about the rent situation as it is, it's
18 insulting. It's insulting, it's offending. I'm not -- you
19 know what I mean, we got the same letter a lot of you folks
20 did back in late July or August, sign up now, the pro-rent
21 stabilization (inaudible) telling us to sign up or it's
22 going to be even worse. I'm not afraid of landowners that
23 don't see me as -- see my kids as people. I'm not afraid of
24 you. You know, I am disgusted by you and I will fight you.

25 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

1 MR. MCCULLEN: Hello, everybody. My name is Greg
2 McCullen (phonetic). I used to rent. I'm a homeowner now.
3 But my heart, I'm always for the people. I just wanted --
4 what I wanted to say today is -- give you something to think
5 about. I just want to say that we have to think beyond
6 ourselves. People are struggling, hurt, and need our help.
7 And this is what I want you to think about. One, we're
8 talking about tenants right now. The homeless, we need to
9 get them off the street, get them in homes, make affordable
10 housing for those that are coming off the street and those
11 that are already in housing so that they can stay in there.
12 Once we get people off the street, make affordable housing,
13 people feel comfortable, they're able to do other things
14 that they want to do, maybe job training, developing, make
15 higher wages, go back to school. But they can't do those
16 things if they don't feel safe that they're going to have a
17 place to stay.

18 And if you do the reduction, allow more money for
19 things that you really need, like high -- I don't like to
20 curse but high damn Central Hudson bills, which is a hole
21 other issue. Once we do these things people can work on
22 their credit, maybe buy homes instead of renting. But we
23 have to think outside of ourselves. And I don't know if you
24 guys rent or own, I'm not going to ask you that, but I'm
25 sure you rented sometime in your life so let's put ourselves

1 in other people's shoes and do the right thing.

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Thank you.

3 Our last speaker, Marie -- sorry. I can't read
4 your last name here.

5 MS. TALASKA: Talaska (phonetic).

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Talaska. Thank you.

7 MS. TALASKA: Hi. I'm Marie Talaska. And tonight
8 I want to share -- I live at Stony Run. I also have gone
9 through the mold situation, leaks in my walls, terrible,
10 terrible situation. If I showed you pictures, you would be
11 horrified with what I've lived through. And what do I get
12 from living through that? A \$200 rent increase this year,
13 the most that I've gotten since I've lived there seven
14 years.

15 I also was there visiting the landlords. It
16 sounded hopeful. Maybe we're naive, but hopeful. Hopefully
17 we have reasons to be hopeful, but as far as I'm concerned,
18 we really need to do something about the rents. I'm on
19 Social Security, I'm paying more than 60 percent of my
20 income, and I don't know what I'm going to do next year if
21 the rents go up again. It's just impossible. Impossible.
22 So I'm asking for a rent decrease also a rent reduction for
23 everybody. And please vote it in.

24 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you, Ms. Talaska. Would you
25 say that your housing situation is a cause of stress in your

1 life?

2 MS. TALASKA: Terrible stress. Terrible, yes.
3 Every time I talk to people about what I've been through, I
4 just want to cry because it's just been horrendous and I've
5 been sick because of it. It's just a terrible situation.

6 MR. TIERNEY: Thank you.

7 MS. TALASKA: So you'll have to excuse me for being
8 so nervous.

9 MR. TIERNEY: I appreciate you coming. Thank you.

10 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Since there is -- sorry.
11 You've already spoken.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'd just ask the Chair for
13 (inaudible) we had.

14 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Let me get some advice about
15 whether or not the chair can offer any indulgences. Am I
16 pope?

17 MR. TIERNEY: Consider me Martin Luther. I don't
18 think you should speak.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm going to defer to the
20 Board. So we also have business to do. So I'm sorry. I
21 would encourage you to write a written statement and submit
22 it to the email address. I'm sorry. This is -- I would
23 like to entertain a motion to go into recess for 20 -- for
24 10 minutes to visit bathrooms for some of us.

25 Arlene --

1 MS. PUENTES: Yes. Second.

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Arlene --

3 MS. PUENTES: Yes, a motion. I want a 10 minute
4 break. My brain is dying.

5 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Great. I'm going to second
6 it. And let's go around and say it clearly.

7 Aye say aye.

8 MS. MARTINEZ: Aye.

9 MS. INOUYE: Aye.

10 MR. BROWN: Aye.

11 MR. TAMPONE: Aye.

12 MS. PERRY: Aye.

13 MR. TIERNEY: Aye.

14 MS. SOTO: Aye.

15 MS. PUENTES: Aye.

16 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Great. We're in recess for
17 10 minutes and then we're going to return and we're going to
18 do our next bit of business. [Board recessed from 4:15 pm to
4:25 pm]

19 So it's 4:25 and we're reconvening.

20 MS. PUENTES: Is somebody taking minutes?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The gentleman behind you.

22 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Because there is a lawsuit
23 that is -- I've run out of brain cells. Because we're being
24 sued, I think we should enter an executive session to just
25 discuss the lawsuit that's been filed against us. I will

1 entertain a motion to enter executive --

2 MR. TAMPONE: I'll motion to enter -

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: A motion to enter executive
4 session by Junior.

5 MS. SOTO: Second.

6 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: A second by Carol.

7 All opposed say nay.

8 MR. TIERNEY: Can we discuss first?

9 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Oh, yes.

10 MR. TIERNEY: Why do we need to go into executive
11 session to discuss this?

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: It's the -- the advice of the
13 DHCR is that we enter is that we enter executive session to
14 discuss a pending litigation.

15 MR. TIERNEY: Okay.

16 MS. PUENTES: I have a question.

17 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Yes?

18 MS. PUENTES: I don't know about these matters,
19 does that mean that there will be no minutes taken?

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: It means that all the members
21 of the public -- okay. We're going to leave.

22 MR. TAMPONE: It's just the Board and the
23 attorneys.

24 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: There will also be no votes.

25 MS. PUENTES: Okay.

1 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: So it's been moved. It's
2 been seconded.

3 All in favor, say aye.

4 MS. MARTINEZ: Aye.

5 MS. INOUYE: Aye.

6 MR. BROWN: Aye.

7 MR. TAMPONE: Aye.

8 MS. PERRY: Aye.

9 MR. TIERNEY: Aye.

10 MS. SOTO: Aye.

11 MS. PUENTES: I oppose.

12 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All right. Okay. One
13 opposed and it passes. Let's go into executive session.

14 [Executive session]

15 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: I'm making a motion to return
16 from the same session.

17 MS. PUENTES: Second.

18 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All in favor?

19 MS. MARTINEZ: Aye.

20 MS. INOUYE: Aye.

21 MR. BROWN: Aye.

22 MR. TAMPONE: Aye.

23 MS. PERRY: Aye.

24 MR. TIERNEY: Aye.

25 MS. PUENTES: Aye.

1 MS. SOTO: Aye.

2 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All opposed?

3 It passes. I would -- do you have text of a motion
4 that I could make? Thank you so much.

5 I would like to make a motion to -- with the
6 following text: The Kingston Rent Guidelines Board requests
7 that DHCR send a letter to the New York Attorney General's
8 office requesting that the Attorney General represent the
9 Kingston Rent Guideline Board in a current litigation In re:
10 Hudson Valley Property Owners, Inc., et al v. City of
11 Kingston, et al.

12 MS. PUENTES: Second.

13 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: It's seconded. We're going
14 to go one-by-one to say votes, unless there's any
15 discussion?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Arlene?

17 MS. PUENTES: Yes, fine.

18 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Michael?

19 MR. BROWN: Aye.

20 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Tara?

21 MS. PERRY: Aye.

22 MS. MARTINEZ: Aye.

23 MS. INOUYE: Aye.

24 MR. BROWN: Aye.

25 MR. TAMPONE: Aye.

1 MR. TIERNEY: Aye.

2 MS. SOTO: Aye.

3 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: The motion passes.

4 Does anyone have any other motions to propose?

5 Hearing no other motions to propose, I would love a
6 motion to adjourn.

7 MS. PUENTES: May I? I want to get out of here.

8 MR. TAMPONE: I'll second.

9 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: Junior seconds. All in
10 favor?

11 MR. BROWN: Aye.

12 MS. PERRY: Aye.

13 MS. MARTINEZ: Aye.

14 MS. INOUYE: Aye.

15 MR. BROWN: Aye.

16 MR. TAMPONE: Aye.

17 MR. TIERNEY: Aye.

18 MS. SOTO: Aye.

19 CHAIR KIPPLEY-OGMAN: All opposed?

20 Hearing none, the motion carries, the motion passes
21 and we're done. And we're adjourned and thank you so much
22 and we will meet Wednesday. Thank you so much, everybody
23 for being here.

24 (The meeting concluded at 4:40 p.m.)

25

1 STATE OF NEW YORK

2

3 I, MARISA D'ANTONIO, do hereby certify that the
4 foregoing was reported by me, in the cause, at the
5 time and place, as stated in the caption hereto,
6 at Page 1 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten
7 transcription consisting of pages 1 through 173, is
8 a true record of all proceedings had at the
9 hearing.

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
11 subscribed my name, this the 12th day of November,
12 2022.

13

14

15 *Marisa D'Antonio*

16 MARISA D'ANTONIO, Reporter

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