

**On the Urgent Need for Rent Relief in New York State**  
**April 22, 2020**

Governor Cuomo, Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Members of the U.S. Congress, New York State Senate, and State Assembly,

We are writing on behalf of a coalition of Democratic Clubs, grassroots advocacy groups, and community leaders throughout New York to ask you to join us in supporting and working to secure rent relief for residential tenants and small business commercial tenants who have lost income due to the outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The COVID-19 outbreak has been declared an emergency at the national, state, and local levels, as well as a global pandemic. New York State has been put on “PAUSE,” requiring that 100% of the workforce, excluding essential services, stay home, resulting in hundreds of thousands becoming unemployed or losing income.

The “CARES Act,” adopted by the federal government in March, provided many unemployed New Yorkers with a critical - albeit temporary - lifeline to get through these difficult times, but much more needs to be done. For many in New York who have lost income due to COVID-19, existing resources, including those provided in the CARES Act, will not even cover the cost of rent, much less other necessary expenses.

**We are asking that you commit to working to provide rent relief to affected tenants**, regardless of prior income level or type of rental unit, who have lost substantial income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **We expect that this relief will be permanent**, such that no affected tenant will be expected to repay the foregone rent when this crisis passes.

We acknowledge and appreciate that steps have been taken to suspend evictions and delay rent payments on certain properties, but these measures are insufficient to meet the needs of the affected members of our community. We hope that you will work with your partners at other levels of government - who will also be receiving this letter - to cover the fiscal cost of relief, whether it be in the form of a temporary federal reimbursement program (as was done under federal disaster relief law from 1974 to 2002 and particularly after the 9/11 terror attack), a state rent cancellation (with or without federal reimbursement for landlords), or other initiative that satisfies our above-described criteria.

Thank you for your consideration, and for all the work you do to serve our community.

Signed: your neighbors,

*List of signatures in formation on the following page(s).*

Barack Obama Democratic Club of Upper Manhattan  
Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats  
Chelsea Reform Democratic Club  
Downtown Independent Democrats  
East River Democratic Club  
Four Freedoms Democratic Club  
Gramercy Stuyvesant Independent Democrats

Grand Street Democrats  
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club  
Lambda Independent Democrats  
New Downtown Democrats  
New Kings Democrats  
United Democratic Organization  
Village Independent Democrats  
West Side Democrats (including Ansonia Independent Democrats, Park River Independent Democrats  
and Community Free Democrats)

Advocates for Justice  
Brooklyn Young Democrats  
College Democrats of New York  
Empire State Indivisible  
Indivisible Harlem  
Indivisible Upper East Side  
Manhattan Young Democrats  
Morningside Heights Resistance  
NY Progressive Action Network  
Progressive Action of Lower Manhattan  
Queens United Independent Progressives

Hon. Vittoria Fariello - *Democratic District Leader, 65th AD Part C*  
Hon. Paul Newell - *Democratic District Leader, 65th AD Part C*  
Hon. Jennifer Hoppe - *Democratic District Leader, 66th AD Part A*  
Hon. Arthur Schwartz - *Democratic District Leader, 66th AD Part A*  
Hon. Janice Oppenheimer - *Democratic District Leader, 67th AD Part C*  
Hon. John Blasco - *Democratic District Leader, 74th AD Part A*  
Hon. Aura Olavarria - *Democratic District Leader, 74th AD Part A*  
Hon. Marisa Redanty - *Democratic District Leader, 75th AD Part B*  
Hon. Ben Wetzler - *Democratic District Leader, 76th AD Part A*  
Hon. Josh Kravitz - *Democratic District Leader, 76th AD Part B*  
Hon. Kim Moscaritolo - *Democratic District Leader, 76th AD Part B*

Hon. Laura Jean Hawkins - *New York State Democratic Committee, 36th AD*  
Hon. Chris Marte - *New York State Democratic Committee, 65th AD*  
Hon. Rachel Lavine - *New York State Democratic Committee, 66th AD*  
Hon. Daniel Marks Cohen - *New York State Democratic Committee, 69th AD*  
Hon. Adam Roberts - *New York State Democratic Committee, 76th AD*  
Hon. Lauren Trapanotto - *New York State Democratic Committee, 76th AD*  
Hon. Neva Shillingford - *New York State Democratic Committee, 83rd AD*  
Hon. Emilia Decaudin - *New York State Democratic Committee, 94th AD*  
Hon. Nicole Doliner - *New York State Democratic Committee, 96th AD*  
Hon. James Testani - *New York State Democratic Committee, 123rd AD*  
Hon. Emily Adams - *New York State Democratic Committee, 125th AD*