

Testimony of Alvin Johnson – February 9, 2010

New York City Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings

Oversight- The recent loss of section 8 vouchers and the future of section 8 in New York City

Good Morning, My name is Alvin Johnson I am the Community Board 11 Housing Committee Chair.

Community Board 11's foot print is in East Harlem/El Barrio where 84% of the housing stock is either subsidized housing or rent regulated housing, with many of these households receiving or on the Section 8 waiting list.

The second page of my testimony is a letter dated December 30, 2009 from The New York City Housing Authority notifying over 3000 families, many of them from East Harlem that applied for and received their Section 8 vouchers that those vouchers are worthless and would not be honored.

In the letter which NYCHA is taking no responsibility for issuing the 3000 Section 8 vouchers that they knew never existed because the HUD funds were never allocated for these vouchers.

I ask the Council to demand that NYCHA come before you immediately and explain to you

- Who was responsible for crushing the hopes and dreams of over 3000 families?
- When did NYCHA know that they had made this unconscionable error?
- What will be done so that this can never happen again?
- NYCHA should immediately place all 3000 voucher-holders in warehoused NYCHA apartments.

I think NYCHA certainly owe this to the devastated families.

In closing:

The future of Section 8 in New York City can only happen with the help of the City Council.

I urge the Council to call your Senate and Assembly counterparts and tell them they must pass Senate bill S3326 and Assembly bill A9230 (please see attached bill). These bills would place all Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings built after 1974 into rent stabilization and making it impossible for the landlord of my building to increase the rent roll from 1.8 million dollars to 2.9 million dollars, which they have done.

If S3326 were passed the most my landlord would be allowed to increase the rents would be 3½ % per year or \$63,000 per year not the 2.1 million dollars he's currently going to get.

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In my building alone where 90% of the apartments will receive Section 8 vouchers we would save Section 8 over 2 million dollars a year if S3326 is passed.

Now times that by the hundreds of Mitchell-Lamas and Section 8 buildings that would be placed into rent stabilization retroactively in New York City saving Section 8 hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

That savings would be more than enough to fund those 3000 NYCHA vouchers.

S3326 is an important bill that will help assure the future of Section 8 in New York City.

We must get this bill passed.

Thank you

Alvin Johnson
Housing Committee Chair, Community Board 11