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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

***Assemblymember Victor Pichardo, Legal Aid, NWBCC, and Tenants
Call on City To Save Deteriorating Rent-Stabilized Building in The
Bronx***

(Bronx, New York)—Assemblymember Victor Pichardo, The Legal Aid Society, NWBCC, and Tenants of 2201-2205 Davidson Ave., a 49 unit Rent-Stabilized building *located* in the Bronx neighborhood of University Heights, on Thursday called on the City of New York to immediately intervene to save the deteriorating building. They are demanding that the City restart the process that will put their building into the Third Party-Transfer (“TPT”) program and establish responsible social ownership over the building.

Tenants have long suffered from years of neglectful ownership. Over the decades, the “owners” of 2201-2205 Davidson Ave., have racked up an astonishing \$12.6 million in unpaid property taxes, at the expense of New York City taxpayers while allowing hundreds of Housing Maintenance Code violations to persist at the property.

Residents of 2201-2205 Davidson Ave. have routinely faced dangerous lead paint in their apartments, severe unresolved leaks, black mold, vermin infestations, hot water outages and a lack of regular maintenance. Currently there are 219 HPD Violations including 119 “C” “immediately hazardous” violations, 63 “B” “hazardous” violation, in addition to Department of Buildings Violations for the elevator.

Tenants are demanding the following:

1. The City must intervene to appoint a responsible manager to improve conditions in the building immediately.
2. The City must move for a judgment of foreclosure based on the property tax debt at 2201 Davidson Ave and then transfer the building to a form of responsible social ownership through the **Third Party Transfer** program.

The City of New York presently has the legal right to proceed to a judgment of foreclosure through an “In Rem” foreclosure proceeding based on the unpaid property tax debt. Such a foreclosure would then free up the building to be placed into the TPT program.

Once the building is placed in the TPT program, the City will be able to ensure proper building maintenance through the Neighborhood Restore organization and the building would be able to be properly maintained pending the building’s transfer to a tenant-owned co-operative building or to a non-profit organization.

“I stand with the tenants of 2201 and 2205 Davidson Avenue, and I want to ensure the issues they face in this building are resolved. I hope that the city offers the necessary resources these residents both need and deserve,” said **Assemblymember Victor M. Pichardo**. “I want to thank Northwest Bronx for all the work they have done for this building, and for my community. They are an invaluable asset to the tenants of Davidson Avenue and the Bronx.”

“Tenants’ aspiration to have a direct say in the management of their building to preserve their homes in the community and to achieve long-term affordability is now entirely within the City’s control and the City should act now,” said **Russell Crane, Staff Attorney at The Legal Aid Society**.

“NWBCCC is proud to support the tenants of 2201-2205 Davidson Avenue in fighting for their self-determination. For far too long the tenants of this building have been fighting to live in dignity. We deeply believe in community governance over land. We urge the City of New York to support the tenants of 2201-2205 Davidson Avenue in the process of transferring the building to a tenant-owned co-operative building or to a mission-driven organization through the Third Party Transfer Program. NWBCCC will work with the Bronx Community Land Trust to ensure that the building is sustainable in perpetuity,” said **Edward Garcia, Lead Community Organizer, Community Development, Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition**.

“We, the tenants, have lived in this building for many years and we are now asking the City use its power to allow us the opportunity to take control and make decisions for our own building,” said **Arturo Miranda, Resident and President of the Tenants Association**.

“Right now my refrigerator has been broken for the last two months which has been a big financial burden on my family and we have had a mold problem in my bathroom that has been getting worse over the last four years without ever being properly fixed. I have two children with disabilities and I don’t think it is fair that we should have to live in these conditions with no one taking responsibility for the problems,” said **Lucero Rodriguez**, a 12 year resident and tenant of apartment 5A.

“I have lived here for 31 years and the superintendent is completely unresponsive when we need any repairs. We had no hot water last week and I called and called the landlord and got no response. We need someone to come in and really look after our building. This landlord only cares about collecting money from us.” Said **Carmen Graham**, from Apartment 3D.

Background on 2201-2205 Davidson Ave.

The City was ready to proceed towards foreclosure in 2015 when a group of investors called “GC Realty Advisors” represented by David Kornitzer, swooped in and purchased the interest in “Romad Realty” — the entity that they claim owns 2201-2205 Davidson Ave. GC Realty Advisors is also associated with the purchase of other distressed New York City buildings. Those investors immediately placed the building into a Federal bankruptcy proceeding in order to freeze the foreclosure process.

In 2016, investors claiming ownership of the building made some initial repairs to the building—including to the elevator—following pressure and advocacy from tenants, local elected officials, including State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Assembly-member Victor Pichardo, and City Councilman Fernando Cabrera.

Unfortunately, and to the great distress of the rent-stabilized tenants of 2201-2205 Davidson Ave., conditions of neglect persisted after those initial repairs as roof and wall leaks grew worse and other building maintenance issues were unattended.

In October 2018, the Federal bankruptcy case was dismissed, thereby removing any impediment to the City continuing to foreclose on the unpaid tax debt.

Meanwhile, through the HPD’s Emergency Repair Program, New York City taxpayers have continued to pay for repairs that the building owners should be responsible for. These charges add to the mounting debt that is already attached to the building due to the unpaid property taxes. HPD has also had to exhaust taxpayer resources on litigation to get judicial orders against the absentee owners for access to make needed repairs.

The Legal Aid Society’s Housing Justice Unit - Group Advocacy is supported by the City’s Human Resource Administration (HRA).

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>

The Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) unites diverse peoples and institutions to fight for racial and economic justice through community organizing to transform the Bronx and beyond. We take direct action to confront injustice and win concrete victories that change material conditions, giving people a sense of the power of our community. We invest in

our members' capacity to realize a shared vision for the Bronx where our people collectively own and govern the assets and political processes in our community.