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***Legal Aid Urges Rent Guidelines Board to Postpone Final Vote and Decision Ahead of Preliminary Hearing on Thursday, Calls for Rent Freeze or Rollback***

(New York, NY) - **Adriene Holder, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Practice at The Legal Aid Society and former tenant member of the New York City Rent Guidelines Board**, released the following statement ahead of the Rent Guidelines Board preliminary vote, urging the Board to postpone the final vote pending new data that will underscore the need for a rent freeze or rent rollback:

“Amid the economic devastation that COVID-19 has caused, raising rents on low-income tenants is tantamount to an eviction. The only appropriate action to mitigate the impact of this unprecedented crisis is a rent freeze or rent rollback for tenants in nearly 1 million rent-regulated apartments across the city, many of who are already at a breaking point after the effects of COVID-19.

Those calling for a rent increase in this climate are demonstrating a callous disregard for public health, and the safety and welfare of all New Yorkers, especially those who are low-income and from communities of color that have been hit hardest by the coronavirus outbreak.

Most timely, however, is the urgent need to postpone the Board’s final vote to August. By then, the data will reflect the effects of COVID-19 which will inform the final vote and underscore the critical need for a rent freeze or rollback.”

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