

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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With Two Weeks Left Until New York's Residential Eviction Moratorium Expires, Legal Aid Calls on Albany to Renew Freeze to Prevent Widespread Evictions, Homelessness

LAS Urges Lawmakers to Expend Freeze Through the End of the Pandemic, Until New York's Rent Relief Program is Fully Operational

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society**, in a recently issued [letter](#), called on Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Andrew Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and other Albany lawmakers to extend New York's eviction moratorium with just two weeks left before the critical protections is set to expire.

This past December, Albany lawmakers enacted legislation that froze all eviction proceedings until March 1, 2021, and through April 30, 2021 for those tenants who submitted a hardship form with the New York State Office of Court Administration (OCA).

According to *The New York Times*, New York City is still at a high risk of exposure to COVID-19, and as of April 15, 2021, thousands of New Yorkers were still testing positive each day for the virus. Just yesterday, the boroughs added 2,702 new COVID-19 cases, and the positivity rate has now plateaued at six percent.

“Thousands of New Yorkers are still contracting COVID-19 each day and despite vaccination efforts, the positivity rate remains stubbornly high,” said **Judith Goldiner, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “This is not the time to allow these critical protections for tenants to expire, and we call on Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie to renew the moratorium through the end of the pandemic and until New York's rent relief program is operational and serving families in need.”

The letter states:

While we hope that New York State has turned the page on the worst of the pandemic, vulnerable New Yorkers still face grave health risks that could threaten resurgence, or a “Fourth Wave,” as some experts have warned. As of early April, less than 25 percent of New York's population had been fully vaccinated against the

coronavirus, and those who were impacted the hardest — low-income people of color — had received the vaccine at a disproportionately low rate. As of April 8, 2021, 70.4% of those who received the vaccine were White, as compared with 17.4% Black and 18% Hispanic or Latinx.

The prospect of evicting families during a pandemic that is far from being over does not represent the progressive values of the State of New York. You have a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable New Yorkers. The Legislature has the power to extend and implement a robust and meaningful moratorium on evictions to prevent an unprecedented housing and homelessness crisis that will devastate low-income families already struggling to get by and cost taxpayer dollars.

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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. www.legalaidnyc.org