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As Delta Variant Surges and With Just Weeks Left Until New York's Residential Eviction Moratorium Expires, Legal Aid Calls on Albany to Renew Freeze to Prevent Widespread Evictions, Homelessness

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society this morning 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 which is set to expire in just a few weeks on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, to protect New Yorkers against the highly contagious Delta variant.

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). Additional legislation was passed this spring to the same safeguards until the end of August.

The *New York Times* recently [reported](#) that New York City has experienced “50 new infections per 100,000 residents over the previous week.” Furthermore, “Staten Island, which has again become a virus hot spot and has some of the lowest vaccination rates in the city, recorded 109 cases per 100,000 residents last week. In Brooklyn and Manhattan, 78.1 and 70.4 cases were recorded, respectively, while the Bronx (58.6) and Queens (56.4).” Per these figures, all of New York City now falls under the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) should resume mask-wearing in public indoor spaces.

Newly published [research](#) in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, strongly supports the public-health rationale that eviction prevention can help stop COVID-19 cases and deaths. The analysis found that mortality increased five-fold in states after moratoriums had expired. Based on the data available, the authors concluded over 10,000 lives could have been saved.

"Without action, thousands of families from across the state will face inevitable eviction come September, losing their homes just as we experience a surge in Delta variant COVID-19 cases," **Judith Goldiner, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society.** "New York State's Emergency Rent Relief Program has not acted quickly enough to get money into the hands of tenants and landlords who need it. Fewer than 5,000 applications out of 160,000 have been processed in the past two months. Less than half of 1% of over \$2 billion dollars in available aid has been paid. The moratorium must be extended to allow time for those funds to be distributed. Until the Delta and other variants subside throughout New York City and the rest of the state, we call on Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie to renew the moratorium through the end of the pandemic."

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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.

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