



July 8, 2022

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

***Legal Aid Files Lawsuit Demanding Immediate Repairs in
Bronx Building with Nearly 500 Housing Violations***

***Tenants Suffering Gas and Hot Water Outages, Lead Paint,
Leaks, and Mold and Vermin Infestations***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society filed a [lawsuit](#) seeking repairs in Bronx Housing Court on behalf of 41 rent-stabilized tenants, who live at 1349 Stratford Avenue, in the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx. Tenants have suffered from a lack of cooking gas since January 2022, in addition to enduring regular hot water outages, lead paint violations, persistent leaks, mold and vermin infestations, amounting to 471 Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) code violations currently on record.

The persistent and repeated lack of repairs and housing code violations constitute harassment by the owners, according to the lawsuit. The refusal to address the repairs represents an effort to force tenants out of the 72-unit rent-stabilized building, which many have lived in for decades.

The property is owned by Patbru Realty Co LLC which, according to City Records, appears to be controlled by the real estate investment family of Irwin Kallman of Greenwich, Connecticut. Concord Management, Michael Rooney, and Michael Rooney Jr. are registered with the City as managing agents of the building on behalf of Patbru Realty Co LLC.

“Patbru Realty and Concord Management should be ashamed of the conditions that they have forced their long-standing tenants at 1349 Stratford Avenue to endure. Without further delay, the

owners must take steps to address the lack of essential services and numerous housing code violations at their building,” said **Benjamin Seibel, staff attorney at The Legal Aid Society.**

“It is inexcusable that the cooking gas outage began in January 2022 and the owners of 1349 Stratford Avenue had not even obtained a permit to begin the repair work until four months later,” said **Russell Crane, staff attorney at The Legal Aid Society.**

New York State Senator Luis R. Sepúlveda said, “My team and I have been working diligently to improve the living conditions of our constituents at 1349 Stratford Avenue in the Bronx. After many complaints of deplorable living conditions in the apartments, lack of access to cooking gas, and several attempts to work with the building’s management to resolve these, we are grateful the Legal Aid Society is taking the necessary steps to ensure the rights of the tenants are respected. I will continue to stand with the tenants and The Legal Aid Society throughout this process and do everything in my power to ensure the tenants live under safe conditions with adequate access to essential services.”

Tenants currently report that there continue to be hot water service outages in the building, and they endured a winter without sufficient heat. Life for tenants at 1349 Stratford Ave became markedly worse in January 2022 when the cooking gas was shut off for the entire building. The lack of cooking gas presents a particular hardship for many of our clients who are elderly and have special diets. The inability to use the stove to cook also greatly impacts large families and those with young children.

Alithia Mackins Wilson, whose family has lived in the building for over 45 years, has 40 open HPD violations for her apartment. Wilson said, “The lack of gas has a big impact on me. I need special food because I take certain medicines. Last month, my electric bill was \$400 because I have to use multiple electric appliances to cook the food I need. The hot plate I was given has already burnt out because of the bad electrical system in the building. They have started doing some work in the last few weeks, but it is just patchwork. They are pulling up the tiles that were on the kitchen floor—that I paid for and put down— and just putting new tiles down. But they are not fixing the actual issue, which is that the floor is sloping badly.”

Gloria Guzman, an elder resident of the building for more than 40 years said, “I feel like we are being abused by the landlord. We tell the super about repairs that we need and its like it goes in one ear and out the other. Without gas to cook, it has been very hard for me, and I have had to rely on other people helping to provide me with food. The other morning when there was no hot water, I had to heat up water on the stove just to be able to wash.”

The owners of 1349 Stratford Ave did not obtain a permit from the NYC Department of Buildings to begin repairs to restore the cooking gas service until last month, four months after the outage began.

HPD’s Housing Litigation Department has filed their own proceeding to address the violations.

The work of The Legal Aid Society's Citywide 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 145 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