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PHOTOS AND VIDEOS: [Google Drive here](#) with images from the rally and the buildings

Bronx Tenants in Two Buildings owned by Landlord David Kleiner Take Legal Action and Speak Out Against Unsafe Conditions

Tenants describe persistent lack of repairs and security concerns

BRONX, NY – Today, rent-stabilized tenants at 337-341 E. 146 St. and 705 Gerard Ave. held a rally outside of Bronx Housing Court to speak about hazardous living conditions and announce two court cases against their common landlord, David Kleiner. Kleiner was previously featured on the city's "worst landlord" list and owns 1915 Billingsley Terrace, the Bronx building that collapsed in 2023.

According to the NYC Department of Housing and Preservation Development, there are 540 open housing code violations across 130 total units in the three buildings. Tenants received the organizing support of New Settlement's membership-driven tenant organizing project, [Community Action for Safe Apartments](#) (CASA). Tenants at 337-341 E. 146 St. are represented by The Legal Aid Society, and have their first court appearance tomorrow morning. Tenants at 705 Gerard Ave. are represented by Urban Justice Center - Safety Net Project, and their court case will be filed in the coming weeks.

At 337-341 E. 146 St., a group of tenants began meeting three years ago, seeking resolution to a variety of issues relating to safety, heat, hot water, and a lack of maintenance in the building. The buildings were held by a court-appointed receiver for much of the past two years while the bank pursued a foreclosure case against Kleiner, but with the landlord regaining control this spring, tenants quickly came together to file a group court case.

"These tenants have spent years asking for basic repairs and safe living conditions, only to be met with delay after delay," said **Jessica Bellinder, Supervising Attorney in the Group Advocacy Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "When landlords fail to uphold their legal responsibilities, tenants have every right to come together and seek relief through the courts. We stand with these residents as they fight for the safe and dignified housing they deserve."

Olga, a resident at 337 E 146 Street, spoke about safety concerns. "The super hires people off the street to handle the trash and tidy up the building, but some of them are dangerous and disrespectful. A group gathers outside on the front steps and use and sell drugs. Multiple tenants in the building have been verbally assaulted or even hit as they enter or exit the building"

Esperanza, another resident at 337 E 146 Street, spoke about building maintenance. “In my apartment, the floor is broken, and the stove doesn't work. A stove is essential because I need to cook for my family, and I keep trying to make this stove work, but one day it could explode or start a fire. Many of my neighbors are going through similar problems, and there are many with leaks and mold. One with young children just learned that there is lead paint in her apartment and that urgent work must be done to stop the children from being poisoned.”

At 705 Gerard Avenue, tenants have been organizing with their neighbors for approximately a year due to safety issues, rent overcharges, illegal partitioning, and a lack of repairs. During that time, building owner David Kleiner evaded responsibility for the many issues tenants were facing, instead leaving them to communicate with a largely unhelpful managing agent. Now the tenants are planning legal action against David Kleiner himself.

“The tenants at 705 Gerard Avenue have faced dangerous conditions for years, including roach and rodent infestations, mold, lack of heat, and serious building integrity and safety concerns. They have repeatedly reported these conditions to the landlord and the city to no avail,” **said Divya Korada, Staff Attorney at the Urban Justice Center’s Safety Net Project.** “By holding their landlord accountable in court, the tenants of 705 Gerard are not only standing up for their own right, but every New Yorker’s right to live in dignified, safe housing.”

“Our hallways have been taken over by intruders who regularly inhabit the hallways and use drugs, leaving behind garbage and drug paraphernalia which makes all the residents feel unsafe,” **shared 705 Gerard tenant leader Ann Maitin.** “We want to regain our hallways from unwanted visitors and garbage!”

Laura Cruz, another resident, spoke about harassment, saying “I am currently in court and the landlord is aware of that but he came to my apartment to force and intimidate me into signing four leases none of which I have. No leases, no landlord intimidation!”

Ana Karen Vivar spoke about issues related to unsanctioned partitions and apartment redesigns. “When I moved into my apartment I did not realize that there was part of my apartment that was sectioned off which I do not have access to. As a result I do not have any windows nor a radiator in my living room or kitchen. Stop illegal monster renovations.”

City Council Member Althea Stevens, representing tenants in 705 Gerard Ave, spoke at the press conference. “People deserve to live in safe, healthy, and dignified homes. We cannot continue to ignore the dangerous conditions that so many tenants are facing across our city. Landlords must be held accountable when they fail to meet their responsibilities, and tenants should never have to spend years fighting for basic repairs and safety. I stand with the residents of 705 Gerard Avenue and 337-341 East 146th Street as they demand the respect, repairs, and justice they deserve.”

Tenants were also supported by a representative of their Congressman, Ritchie Torres. **Nanette Alvarado read a statement on Torres’ behalf.** “No Bronxite or New Yorker should be forced to live in buildings where neglect or unsafe conditions threaten their health and safety. Safe and

decent housing is a basic human right. The courage of tenants who organize and advocate for themselves is the foundation of housing justice in this city. I commend the residents for forming tenant associations and uniting across buildings to hold their landlord accountable. I also recognize the critical role of legal service providers and community advocates like New Settlement who stand with tenants every step of the way. Their work ensures that families are not left to fight alone against neglect and displacement. As long as these conditions persist, I will continue to support efforts that demand accountability and meaningful protections for tenants across the Bronx and beyond. Every family deserves to feel safe in their own home. These tenants deserve nothing less.”

City Council Member Elsie Encarnacion, whose district includes 337-341 E 146 Street, shared in a statement: “Every tenant deserves to come home to a safe, decent, and dignified living space in District 8. When landlords respond to repair demands with harassment, neglect, and retaliation, we have an obligation to stand up and fight back. The tenants at 337 and 341 East 146th Street have shown extraordinary courage in organizing together and taking their landlord to court, and I am proud to stand alongside them, CASA, Legal Aid Society, and the Safety Net Project in demanding the repairs and respect they are owed. No tenant should ever be made to feel that their immigration status, their income, or their willingness to speak out makes them a target, and we cannot stop until every bad actor landlord is held fully account.”

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ABOUT NEW SETTLEMENTS’ COMMUNITY ACTION FOR SAFE APARTMENTS (CASA)

Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) is New Settlement’s housing organizing initiative. CASA is made up of community residents in our densely populated and underserved area of the Southwest Bronx who work together to build our knowledge and leadership to improve the living conditions in our neighborhood and maintain affordable housing through collective action. CASA’s work combines building-specific tenant organizing, neighborhood-based campaigns, tenants’ rights workshops, legal clinics, monthly community meetings and a leadership development program. CASA also participates in coalitions that advocate for legislation to preserve affordable housing and better protect tenants.

The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit law firm that exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For 150 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 the people we serve and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org