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Legal Aid, LSNYC File Motion to Intervene in Landlords' Lawsuit Seeking to Block Duly Passed Rent Freeze for New Yorkers Living in Rent-Stabilized Housing

(NEW YORK, NY) — The Legal Aid Society and Legal Services NYC [filed](#) a [motion](#) on behalf of Tenants and Neighbors and the Met Council on Housing asking the court to dismiss a lawsuit brought by a group of landlords that seeks to block a recently approved rent freeze that, beginning in October, will freeze the rent for more than 2 million New Yorkers who currently reside in rent-stabilized housing.

The rent freeze was passed by the New York City Rent Guidelines Board – an independent board tasked with deciding how much rent for stabilized units can increase each year – in June following a months-long research process that included seven public meetings, four public hearings, and the Board's review of hundreds of written and oral comments from tenants and owners.

Despite this, the landlords' lawsuit, filed in New York State Supreme Court in Staten Island, claims that the Board lacked sufficient evidence to justify passing a rent freeze on one- and two-year leases.

The motion filed today asserts that this claim is demonstrably false, citing numerous data points used by the Board to justify their votes for a rent freeze. For example, the Board reviewed [data](#) that shows nearly half of rent stabilized tenants are considered 'rent burdened,' meaning they spend over 30 percent of their income on rent, and nearly one third are 'extremely rent burdened,' spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent. Most landlords, meanwhile, continued to see [steady or increasing profits](#), according to the Board's 2026 Income and Expense Study.

Therefore, the motion argues that because the Board's order was lawful, rational, and well within its discretion, the landlords' lawsuit must be dismissed and the rent freeze must be allowed to go into effect later this year.

"The Rent Guidelines Board exists to weigh independent data alongside tenant and landlord testimony to make an informed decision about whether to raise rents for millions of predominantly low-income New York City renters," said **Edward Josephson, Director of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "This year's process — which ultimately resulted in a critically needed rent freeze — was no different than in past years. Landlords' claim that the Board relied on cherry-picked data is simply false, and this lawsuit is nothing more than a callous attempt to raise rents on their tenants yet again. At a moment of historic unaffordability across the five boroughs, we look forward to defending this long-overdue rent freeze in court on behalf of the millions of low-income tenants who depend on it."

"Let's be clear about what this lawsuit really is: an attempt to gouge working-class New Yorkers to pad corporate profits," said **Carolyn Norton, the interim Chief of Litigation and Advocacy at Legal Services NYC**. "The data plainly show that the majority of families in this city are rent-burdened and need an immediate intervention. That is precisely why the Rent Guidelines Board lawfully enacted a rent freeze: so renters across the five boroughs could keep a few more dollars in their pockets every month in this era of inflation and economic uncertainty. Landlords and their financial backers want to undermine not only New York City families, but critical government institutions, simply to increase their margins. We're not going to let that happen."

"Landlords are trying to use the courts to overturn a rent freeze they couldn't stop through the public process," said **Darius Khalil Gordon, Executive Director of the Met Council on Housing**. "The Rent Guidelines Board heard months of testimony and reviewed extensive economic data showing what tenants across this city already know: New Yorkers are being crushed by housing costs. This freeze was lawful, justified and desperately needed. Met Council on Housing is proud to stand with tenants in defending it and making sure landlords cannot erase a hard-won victory for more than two million rent-stabilized New Yorkers."

"New York City's rent-stabilized tenants cannot afford another rent hike, and they should not have to live with the uncertainty of whether a court will overturn a decision that was carefully considered and supported by evidence," said **Katy Bordonaro, Tenants & Neighbors Board Member**. "The Rent Guidelines Board heard directly from tenants, reviewed extensive data, and did what it was created to do: weigh the realities facing both tenants and property owners. For millions of New Yorkers already struggling with the high cost of housing, this rent freeze is urgently needed. We are proud to stand with the City in defending the Board's decision and ensuring that the rent freeze takes effect as intended."

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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 our clients and helps improve our communities.

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