



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0173-2014, **Version:** A

Proposed Res. No. 173-A

Resolution urging the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would enable the spouse of someone enrolled in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE) to continue receiving SCRIE benefits when the enrolled spouse dies, and the widow or widower is within 5 years of the age requirement for receipt of SCRIE

By Council Members Van Bramer, Cabrera, Chin, Gibson, Levine, Reynoso, Rose, Gentile and Eugene

Whereas, The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program offers eligible tenants an exemption from rent increases; and

Whereas, New York City tenants are eligible for the SCRIE program if the tenant or his or her spouse is 62 years of age or over, they live in a rent regulated apartment, have a combined household income at or below \$50,000, and are paying at least one third of their income toward their rent; and

Whereas, Owners of buildings that house SCRIE recipients receive a credit against their real estate taxes from the City of New York; and

Whereas, According to the New York City Department of Finance (DOF), more than 53,000 New York City tenants rely on the SCRIE program, which is administered by DOF; and

Whereas, As reported in a 2013 Progress Report of the New York Academy of Medicine, the Census Bureau estimates that in New York State the number of adults age 65 and older is projected to grow by 50 percent over the next twenty years;

Whereas, When a tenant who is enrolled in the SCRIE program dies, the owner of the building is responsible for notifying DOF so benefits are terminated the first day of the month following the date of death; and

Whereas, A surviving household member who meets the eligibility requirements may apply for a transfer of SCRIE benefits by simply sending a letter of request to DOF, along with a copy of the certificate of death, and proof of birth; and

Whereas, If the transfer of benefits is denied due to age eligibility, the widow or widower will likely be forced to either generate a significant amount of new income to continue paying the rent or seek other housing options; and

Whereas, Generating new income may be difficult because adults 55 years and older face significant challenges to finding employment; and

Whereas, There is a lack of affordable housing in New York City, which also makes finding a new housing option difficult; and

Whereas, It is necessary to ensure that low income New Yorkers who will soon become eligible for the SCRIE program are not displaced as a result of the death of a spouse; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would enable the spouse of someone enrolled in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE) to continue receiving SCRIE benefits when the enrolled spouse dies, and the widow or widower is within 5 years of the age requirement for receipt of SCRIE.

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