

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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July 14, 2025

Start: 1:36 p.m.

Recess: 1:46 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Pierina Ana Sanchez, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
Alexa Avilés
Eric Dinowitz
Oswald Feliz
Crystal Hudson
Lincoln Restler

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Jennifer Gutiérrez

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone check for the Committee on Housing and Buildings located in the Chambers recorded on July 14, 2025, by Pat Kurzyna.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon, good afternoon. Welcome to the New York City Council vote on the Committee on Housing and Building.

At this time, please silence all electronics and do not approach the dais.

Chair Sanchez, you may begin.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. One moment.

[GAVEL] Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Council Member Pierina Sanchez, Chair of the Committee on Housing and Buildings.

On January 10th of this year, a five-alarm fire at 2910 Wallace Avenue in the Bronx displaced 250 residents in 87 households in Council Member Riley's District. On January 15th, another major fire displaced nearly 200 residents in over 70 apartments at 3030 Heath in my District. And tragically, many of us began our term as Council Members with the horrific fire on January 9th, 2022, where 17 lives were tragically lost at Twin Parks

Northwest. In 2024, there were 20,000 structural fires. NYCEM reported to our Committee that there were 2,000 all-hands fires, including 130 two-alarm, 40 three-alarm, 15 four-alarm, and 10 five-alarm fires in 2023. All gratitude to our first responders who, like they do time and again, jumped in harm's way and prevented greater loss of life. But these fires result in hundreds of vacate orders and thousands of displacements, in their best of circumstances. So today, I am proud to be joining Council Member Krishnan and Council Member Gutiérrez as we take bold steps to improve our City's fire and emergency response infrastructure for displaced survivors. Our City has a robust set of policies and programs, including Red Cross-coordinated services in the time period immediately preceding a displacement event, including hotel accommodations and, in some instances, financial assistance. HPD operates longer-term shelters for displaced families and individuals. And agencies, including the New York City Office of Emergency Management, or NYCEM, Department of Buildings, Health, Fire, and others, coordinate work on an ongoing basis to achieve tenant relocations, building and unit repairs, and tenant services. And

while these services are unique among major cities, the tenant engagement side of the City's fire response is broken, from communication with displaced tenants to sheltering issues, protection of personal property, building access, and transparency and enforcement around repairs needed and timelines.

That is why today, we are voting as a Council to move the Back Home Act. This includes, to stop long-distance displacements, Council Member Krishnan's Intro. 607, which requires tenants to be relocated in the same community district, in a nearby community district, or in the same borough after a displacement event. To ensure centralized long-term coordination with displaced New Yorkers, Council Member Gutiérrez's 749-A designates an office or an agency as responsible for assisting residents displaced by an emergency. And to curb demolition as neglect and neglect as displacement, Council Member Gutiérrez's Intro. 750-A requires additional documentation when an owner seeks to demolish a building and reporting on the correction of violations. Council Member Gutiérrez's Reso. 307 calls upon New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that limits the duration

of time for which a landlord can collect payment from loss of rents, insurance coverage, without conducting meaningful repairs to an uninhabitable unit leased by a tenant to three months. We'll also be voting on Resolution 802-A by Council Member Julie Won, calling on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign Senate Bill 3886 and Assembly 5427, requiring negligent building owners to cover the cost of a temporary apartment while repairs are being made.

I want to thank my team, Chief-of-Staff Maria Villalobos, Deputy Chiefs Ben Ratner and Kim Castellanos, Gerard Fernandez and Carlo Dominguez for all their help getting us and our Committee to this day, and of course Committee Staff, thanks to the Housing and Buildings Committee Staff, Senior Legislative Counsel Austin Malone, Senior Policy Analyst Jose Conde and Andrew Bourne, Policy Analyst Dirk Spencer, Finance Head Jack Story and Data Scientist Reese Hirota.

I want to take a moment for a special thanks and congratulations to our Senior Policy Analyst Andrew Bourne, whose last day with the Council is this coming Friday. Andrew has been an

integral member of both the Committee on Housing and Buildings and the Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts for the past three years, and we're incredibly grateful for Andrew's work with the Committee. Wish him the best as he heads off to the NYU Law Class of 2028. We're really going to miss you, Andrew. You are brilliant and we were so lucky to have had you these past three years.

I'm joined today by several Colleagues, but first I'm going to pass the mic over to Councilmember Gutiérrez to speak on her bills.

COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Chair, and I just want to congratulate everyone else who's passing bills today, but I'm proud to be passing Intro. 749, 750, and Reso. 307, of which are in direct response to calls and postings that you see or the news that you hear in District 34, but throughout the city. We know that when a fire strikes, tenants, landlords, they're not just losing their homes, they're falling into a black hole of silence and confusion. No one tells them what comes next. No one tells them who to call. Where do we go from here? Families are left couch surfing without

their identification documents, without updates, having to fend for themselves when it comes to dropping their kids off at school, going to work, and without any clear way forward. Landlords are left navigating an incredibly complicated system to try and rebuild. It's kind of a quiet invisible pain that the City has ignored for far too long. So Intro. 749 creates a real staffed case navigation team at HRO, so it's an existing agency we're repurposing so that displaced tenants and property owners aren't alone. Intro. 750 ensures landlords can't just walk away from a building after a fire. They have to show they've made a good faith effort to repair before pursuing demolition. These bills fill a gap that the City left wide open. They bring real accountability and care to New Yorkers when they need it most, and I'm just so proud of my team who helped get me here, and thank you, Chair Sanchez, who's been just a delight and a true leader in this Committee. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much, Council Member Gutiérrez, and congratulations.

Do any of my Colleagues have questions or comments?

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2 All right. With that, I will now ask the
3 Clerk to call the roll.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Good
5 afternoon. This is a roll call vote of the Committee
6 on Housing and Buildings. All five items are coupled.
7 Chair Sanchez.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Proudly vote aye on
9 all.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:
11 Council Member Dinowitz.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Aye on all.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Thank
14 you, Council Member Dinowitz.

15 Council Member Feliz.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Aye on all.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Thank
18 you, Council Member Feliz.

19 Council Member Abreu.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:
22 Avilés.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Aye on all.

24 Congratulations to my Colleagues. Thank you so much
25 for the work you're doing for New Yorkers.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Thank
3 you, Council Member Avilés.

4 Council Member Hudson.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Aye, and
6 congratulations to Council Member Gutiérrez.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: And
8 Council Member Restler.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Aye, and
10 congratulations to Council Member Gutiérrez.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Chair
12 Sanchez, by a vote of seven in the affirmative, zero
13 in the negative, and zero abstentions, all items are
14 adopted.

15 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much,
16 Clerk, and with that, I call this meeting to a close.

17 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date September 1, 2025