

Whereas, While some attention and federal legislation has been focused on the consequences faced by home owners in difficult financial times, little has been mentioned about options for renters who face job loss; and

Whereas, New York City is home to millions of renters with over 1 million under rent stabilization; and

Whereas, The recent economic downturn has increased the amount of renters finding themselves unable to pay rent; and

Whereas, A May 5, 2009 New York Times article entitled “Once Very Good Renters Now Facing Eviction” outlines how unemployment trends are affecting so many in this City; and

Whereas, In 1970, the City and State enacted the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) which permits income eligible seniors to apply for exemption from future rent increase; and

Whereas, With the SCRIE model as precedent, and the current financial climate in mind, New York State should amend the Real Property Tax Law to provide municipalities the ability to extend such an exemptions to certain unemployed renters and protect them from losing their homes or living arrangements, and;

Whereas, An Unemployed Rent Increase Exemption (URIE) could help provide a temporary rent freeze for those unemployed New Yorkers whose income is below a certain threshold; and

Whereas, By implementing URIE, the City can help to protect unemployed New Yorkers from facing increasing rents and adding to their burden when they can least afford such increases; and

Whereas, The Unemployed Rent Increase Exemption could provide a sunset clause of two years to provide state and local officials with time to re-evaluate its options; and

Whereas, Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers are out of work and facing uncertain futures; and

Whereas, New York State can help to alleviate some of this uncertainty by allowing a period of time that would prevent or reduce the impact of a rent increase upon certain unemployed New Yorkers in the City; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to create an Unemployed Rent Increase Exemption (URIE).

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