



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1566-2021, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1566

Resolution calling upon the City and State Universities of New York to provide students who opt out of campus housing with current information on residential tenants' rights.

By Council Member Maisel

Whereas, The economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a severe toll on the City's rental market, according to StreetEasy's November 2020 Market Reports; and

Whereas, While New York City ("NYC" or "City") rents have fallen more in 2020 than they did during the Great Recession, a 2021 StreetEasy report revealed that the share of rent cuts represented only four percent of the total market-rate inventory and were largely reflected in the City's priciest neighborhoods; and

Whereas, Additionally, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, City rents had been steadily increasing for about a decade, which has contributed to NYC being consistently ranked as one of the most expensive cities to live in the United States (U.S.) over the years; and

Whereas, The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted employment in NYC; according to the New York State ("State") Department of Labor, the unemployment rate increased from 3.5 percent to 11 percent in 2020, with a high of 20.4 percent in June; and

Whereas, According to the NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, these job losses were widespread and primarily affected low-income New Yorkers, including young workers; workers with lower education attainment; workers who are Black or Hispanic, and women; and

Whereas, In an effort to avert homelessness for many New Yorkers, the City and the State promoted existing resources, created new housing resources and passed housing legislation for the COVID-19-era; and

Whereas, In addition to the City's free "Tenant Helpline," which predates the COVID-19 pandemic, and

the State Legislature’s COVID Rent Relief Program, the State passed the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Act, which includes eviction restrictions to protect most tenants from eviction through May 1, 2021; and

Whereas, Despite government resources available to NYC renters, landlords have been reported for taking advantage of uninformed New Yorkers, mostly in neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID-19 and lower income communities of color; and

Whereas, The City University of New York (“CUNY”), the largest urban public university in the U.S., serves more than 271,000 degree and non-degree seeking students with over 228,000 course registrations at 25 colleges across the five boroughs; and

Whereas, The State University of New York (“SUNY”), one of the largest comprehensive public universities in the U.S., serves more than 433,000 full- and part-time students with over 7,000 degree and certificate programs at 64 colleges across the State; and

Whereas, At a June 11, 2020 City Council Committee on Higher Education hearing, CUNY Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost José Luis Cruz testified that recent student polling suggests that since March, nearly 40 percent lost their jobs, roughly 18 percent have gone hungry, and 55 percent face housing insecurity; and

Whereas, Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 40 percent of students earned less than \$20,000 annually and nearly half were first generation college students, per a 2016 CUNY Student Experience Survey; and

Whereas, When it comes to housing, CUNY and SUNY students are in a vulnerable position and providing information on their rights as a residential tenant can empower them to be independent New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the City and State Universities of New

York to provide students who opt out of campus housing with current information on residential tenants' rights.

LS #16205
2/21/2021
CGR