



June 1, 2026

Governor Hochul  
Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Speaker Carl Heastie  
Members of the State Legislature

Dear State Leaders,

New Yorkers are struggling to afford the rent in every part of the state as costs rise and wages stagnate. Renters in Syracuse have seen nearly 20% rent hikes, tenants in the Capitol Region have to work 64 hours a week just to make rent, and street homelessness and shelter stays have skyrocketed by 366% in Ithaca (Tompkins County) over the past decade. Tenants make up nearly half the state and a majority in nearly every major city, yet local officials are limited in our ability to enact policies to make rent affordable for our tenant constituents.

As local elected officials representing New Yorkers in municipal and county governments across the state, we see first hand every day the toll that housing instability, evictions, and the high cost of housing have on our communities. Localities all around the state need more tools to make rents affordable and keep people in their homes long-term.

The Rent Emergency Stabilization for Tenants (REST) Act, S04659 Kavanagh/A04877 Shrestha, would empower local elected officials to keep our communities affordable by removing barriers to adopting and expanding rent stabilization. Rent stabilization makes rent affordable, giving tenants the stability they need to build their lives: start a family, put down roots, go back to school, start a business. We urge you to move quickly to adopt the REST Act to give our localities more ability to confront the housing crisis and tailor policies to fit local housing conditions.

In 2019, New York State passed the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act which, among other reforms, amended the Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) of 1974 to allow any locality in New York State to enact rent stabilization. Under the original framework of the 1974 law, originally designed for New York City, localities must conduct a vacancy survey of eligible properties and determine an arbitrary vacancy rate of below 5% before voting to declare a housing emergency and adopt rent stabilization.

Over the last six years, a dozen municipalities around the state have considered or conducted, in some cases more than once, costly vacancy studies to determine eligibility for rent stabilization. Villages, towns, and cities that have taken action to protect their constituents have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars conducting and defending vacancy studies that are inefficient and prone to lawfare. The City of Kingston, which is the only locality that has successfully adopted rent stabilization since 2019, was just sued for a second time after overcoming three years of litigation that upheld their first declaration of a

housing emergency. The study requirement has become a boon to litigious corporate landlords and a barrier to local control of housing policy.

The REST Act would modernize the Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA; 1974, 2019) outside the City of New York in three ways:

- **It would allow municipalities to declare a housing emergency and opt in to ETPA by reviewing relevant public data and holding public hearings.** The bill would allow localities to declare a housing emergency after considering publicly available measures of housing affordability, such as overall housing supply, availability of affordable and habitable housing, rates of rent burden, local or regional homeless rate, and more. Municipalities could still conduct vacancy studies if they choose, but they would also be able to decide that rent stabilization is needed in their community based on other relevant existing measurements of the local housing market conditions.
- **Where municipalities opt-in, it would bring buildings constructed 15 years ago into rent stabilization on a rolling basis.** When the ETPA was passed in 1974, the law included all the eligible buildings that had been built on or before January 1, 1974. This change would maintain the exclusion of new construction, but update the cut off date from that arbitrary point in time 50 years ago to a rolling 15 year threshold.
- **It would give municipalities local control to adjust the size of buildings that are covered.** ETPA currently applies rent stabilization to buildings with 6 or more units, common for buildings in high-density New York City, but an unsuitable threshold for housing in other parts of the state that tends to be smaller. Similar to what has already been enacted through local adoption of Good Cause Eviction protections, this would provide localities the option to cover buildings as small as 4 units, to account for local housing needs.

Twenty-one municipalities around the state have voted to adopt Good Cause Eviction protections since the 2024 state law, clear evidence of the need and desire for localities to adopt measures that limit rent hikes and evictions. The REST Act would give municipalities another tool to adopt and tailor to our local housing conditions to confront the housing affordability crises in our communities. Many of our municipalities are taking action to expand tenants rights and increase housing supply, and we should also have the option of adopting rent regulations that will stabilize local families and rental prices.

We, the undersigned local officials, representing renters across New York State, urge you to pass the REST Act, **S04659/A04877**.

Sincerely,

Abe Uchitelle, Majority Leader, County Legislature, Ulster County

Alexander Marion, City Auditor, City of Syracuse

Alexandria Wojcik, Mayor, Village of New Paltz

Alfredo D Balarin, 11 Ward Common Council Member, City of Albany

Alix Winsby, Legislator, Dutchess County

Andrew Zink, Village Trustee, Saugerties

Arthur Lumpkin, Councilman Ward 3, City of Albany

Austin Tylec, Mayor, City of North Tonawanda

Barbara Laird, Town Board, Ward 2, Town of Poughkeepsie

Beatriz LeBron , Commissioner, Rochester

Benjamin Falk, Alderman, Ward 4, Kingston

Carolyn Bennett Glauda, Councilmember, Ward 4, Beacon, NY

Carolyn Delvecchio Hoffman, Assistant Majority Leader, Monroe County

Carolyn Glauda, Councilmember, Ward 4, City of Beacon

Chiara Smith, Councilmember, City of Rochester

Christopher Grant, Councilmember, Ward 6, City of Poughkeepsie

Claire Cousin, Councilmember Ward 5, City of Hudson,

Dan Aymar-Blair, Comptroller, Dutchess County

Daniel Atonna, Common Council Member, Ward 8, City of Poughkeepsie

DaRon Wilson, Councilmember at Large, City of Poughkeepsie

David A. Rivera, Councilmember, City of Buffalo

Debbie Hecht, Councilmember, Rhinebeck

Derek Johnson, Common Council Member, Ward 2, City of Albany

Ducson Nguyen, Alderperson, Ward 2, City of Ithaca

Eleanor Pupko, Trustee, Village of Rhinebeck

Ernest Henry, Common Council Member, Ward 1, City of Poughkeepsie

Evan Menist, Common Council Member, Ward 2, City of Poughkeepsie

Genesis Ramos, County Legislator, Orange County

Giselle Martinez, Councilmember, Ward 1, City of Newburgh

Greg Campbell-Cohen, Councilmember, District 6, Troy

Gregory McCollough, Legislator, Ulster County

Hanna Shvets, Alderperson, Ward 5, City of Ithaca

Jeanne L. Walsh, Town Supervisor, Rosendale

Jeffrey Elder, Niagara County Legislature, Minority Leader, Niagara County

Jen Metzger, County Executive, Ulster County

Jeremiah Frei-Pearson, Council Member, White Plains

Jona Favreau, Councilmember District 5, Troy, NY

Jonathan Redeker, County Legislator, Orange County

Jorge DeFendini, Alderperson, Ward 1, City of Ithaca Common Council

Joseph Donaldson, Ulster County Legislature District 8, Esopus/Ulster/Kingston

Kate Ryan, Town Councilperson, New Paltz Town Board

Kayla Matos, Alderperson Ward 1, City of Ithaca

Kenny Herzog, Trustee, Village of Tarrytown

Kristofer Munn, County Legislator, District 20, Dutchess County

Len Simon, Deputy Mayor, Croton-on-Hudson

Lisa Kaul, Legislator, Dutchess County

Lola Roberts, Councilmember, Ward 3, Hudson

Marissa G Marvelli, Alderman Ward 3 , Kingston/Ulster

Mary Lupien, Councilmember, Rochester

Maurice Mo Brown, Legislator, District 15, Onondaga County

Meghan Keegan, Council Member, City of Albany

Michael Tierney, Alderman, Ward 2, City of Kingston

Michele Hirsch, Common Councilmember, Ward 9, Majority Leader, City of Kingston

Natasha Law, President Board of Trustees, Village of Catskill

Nate Hotchkiss, Councilmember, Binghamton

Nedra Thompson Thompson, Councilmember Ward 7, City of Poughkeepsie

Owusu Anane, Councilman Owusu Anane, Albany

Paloma Wake, Councilmember, At-Large, City of Beacon

Perry Allen, Trustee, Village of Red Hook

Robert Dennison, Alderman, City of Kingston

Robert G. Cantelmo, Mayor, City of Ithaca

Sam Fein, Chief City Auditor, City of Albany

Sara Pasti, Ward 1 Alderwoman, City of Kingston

Sara Verdon, Councilmember, Catskill

Sparrow Tobin, Legislator District 20, Orange County

Stanley Martin, Councilmember, City of Rochester

Stephen R Hunter, Orange County Legislator - D 16, Orange County

Tamika Stewart, Councilmember, City of Newburgh

Taylor Bruck, Ulster County Clerk, County

Theodore "Teddy" Eagleson Secor, Councilmember, Stanford

Thomas Boomhower, Village Trustee, Village of Catskill

Tim Rogers, Town Supervisor, New Paltz

Tom Hoey, Council Member, Ward 15, Albany

Trevor Redl, County Legislator District 1, Dutchess County

Yvette Valdés Smith, Chair of the Dutchess County Legislature, Dutchess