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**Council Members Call for a Moratorium on Changes in Benefits
from Rent Freeze Renewal Review**

*Renewal Review will Reduce or Remove Rent Freeze Benefits for
over 5,700 Low Income Seniors and People with Disabilities*

Council Members Helen Rosenthal, along with Council Members Margaret Chin, Andrew Cohen, Ydanis Rodriguez, and Mark Levine are calling for a moratorium on changes in benefits from the NYC Rent Freeze Program that will **reduce or remove rent freeze benefits for over 5,700 low income seniors and people with disabilities.**

Citywide, the review of the Rent Freeze Program (formerly known as SCRIE, Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption, and DRIE, Disabilities Rent Increase Exemption) will reduce benefits for 4,848 senior citizens and 210 people with disabilities and remove benefits from 623 senior citizens and 49 people with disabilities.

Many questions remain for residents, such as the increased rent cost for each tenant, how it will go into effect, and a possible appeals process.

The moratorium would delay the impact of the changes in the Rent Freeze program until January 1, 2016. It would give the City Council time to clarify the details of the changes from the Department of Finance (DOF), which administers the program. The moratorium would also give residents time to plan for the change and solidify their finances, and it would help the Council arrange possible solutions for individual residents and for the city as a whole to allow as many impacted residents as possible to stay in their homes.

Seniors and people with disabilities who receive rent-freeze benefits from the City learned of the changes in a letter from DOF last week.

"The City must find a way to preserve these 5,730 units of affordable housing and protect the seniors and disabled tenants who live in them," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**. "City Council district offices are the front lines of social services from the City, and we need time and details from the Department of Finance to determine how to best serve tenants who will be impacted by the renewal changes in the Rent Freeze program. Under the leadership of Council Member Julissa Ferreras, Chair of the Finance Committee, I'm confident that we will work with the NYC Department of Finance to resolve this issue."

"I was shocked to learn that the City may be cutting housing benefits for seniors and tenants with disabilities without taking the time to fully inform Council members and our constituents," said **Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair of the Council's Committee on Aging**. "We need a moratorium on any cuts to SCRIE and DRIE in order to understand what the situation is, why actions are being taken, and what the City and the Council can do to prevent our constituents from losing subsidies they may need to stay in their homes."

"These 5,000 New Yorkers depend on NYC Rent Freeze Programs for stable and affordable housing. I join my colleagues in calling for a moratorium in changes to their benefits until further information is provided," said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

"With the highest number of SCRIE/DRIE eligible seniors living in my district, I am incredibly concerned with the news that some of my constituents will lose their benefits based on inefficient income estimates. Over 4,000 people in Washington Heights and Inwood benefit from this incredible program that helps keep our seniors in their homes. I look forward to working with the Administration and my colleagues to ensure our most vulnerable are protected," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**.

"This decision by the Department of Finance to reduce or remove benefits for over 5,700 low income and disabled seniors puts some of the city's most vulnerable residents in a precarious position. Seniors on fixed incomes have to carefully budget their personal finances, and this unexpected move hurts their ability to plan ahead to make ends meet. I urge a delay to the sudden changes imposed by the Department of Finance to give time to all those impacted to plan accordingly," said **Council Member Mark Levine**.

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