

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 28, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

As Members of the New York Congressional Delegation, we write to urge you to extend the eviction moratorium that is set to expire on August 31. With the sharp rise in COVID-19 cases, the beginning of the school year and continued issues associated with this global pandemic, it is imperative that New Yorkers can stay in their homes. Further, an extension will allow for the delays with the federally-funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to be resolved, and payments to tenants and landlords to be made without putting families at risk of eviction.

Millions of Americans are still facing housing insecurity because of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of June of this year, nearly 15% of Americans are behind on rent payments.¹ The eviction moratoriums at both the state and federal levels have been necessary to protect tenants from eviction while the money made available to states and localities through ERAP could be distributed. In light of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision² to effectively end the federal eviction moratorium, the New York State eviction moratorium is all that remains to keep our constituents who have faced financial difficulty as a result of the pandemic in their homes.

The protections provided by the eviction moratoriums have been particularly necessary in New York. New York State has the highest share of renter households in the United States (46%), with 63% of those households located in New York City. In addition, minority communities are likely to be disproportionately affected by the end of the eviction moratorium. Hispanic households make up 37% of New York City's low-income renter households and Black households make up 27%. Since April 2020, Black and Hispanic New Yorkers have also experienced higher rates of employment income loss than other racial or ethnic groups.

While New York was awarded one of the largest amounts of ERAP funding at over \$2 billion, it was one of the slowest states to start making payments. As of the most recent data provided by

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, Week 32 (June 23-July 5).

² Alabama Association of Realtors, Et. Al. v. Department of Health and Human Services, Et. Al. 695 U.S. 1 (2021).

your office, only 15,548 payments totaling just over \$203 million have been distributed in New York. The Office of the State Comptroller recently put out a report estimating that when using rent-burden as a measure, it is likely that more than 1 million homes are eligible for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Even so, only 176,113 households have applied for rent relief. An extension of the eviction moratorium would allow for the hundreds of thousands of eligible households to apply for ERAP and receive payments to bring them up to date on their rent while keeping them in their homes.

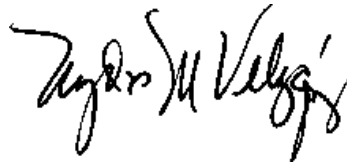
We remain concerned with the litany of problems regarding the roll out and execution of ERAP in New York. The state needs to address our concerns including the lack of outreach to potentially eligible households and the delays both for processing applications and making payments under the program. In this regard we appreciate your statements and commitment to improving the program and ensuring quicker payments. However, with the eviction moratorium set to expire August 31 there is not enough time to fix these issues and get payments out to landlords and tenants. Accordingly, an extension of the eviction moratorium is the only way to ensure this program can both work as intended and keep families in their homes.

We therefore urge you to take the necessary actions within your power to extend the eviction moratorium. Thank you for your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



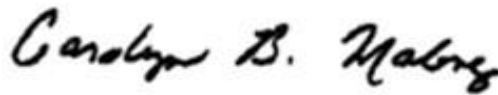
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Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress




Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress



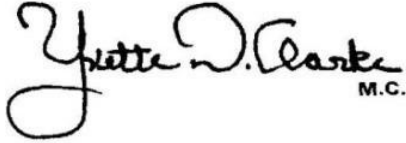
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Yvette D. Clarke
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

cc: Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, New York State Senate
Speaker Carl E. Heastie, New York State Assembly