March 22, 2023

Dear Governor Hochul, Lieutenant Governor Delgado, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Heastie:

The undersigned organizations call on you to commit $250 Million in FY23 for the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase (TOPA) Act in New York State (Myrie S.221/Mitanyes A.3351).

TOPA would give tenants the right of first offer and right of first refusal when their building goes up for sale. Under TOPA, tenants could buy the building together and turn it into a limited equity cooperative, or work with a nonprofit or community land trust to convert it into a permanently affordable rental. If passed and funded, this bill could result in the creation of over 20,000 social housing units across the state over the next five years.

While landlords don't have to prioritize tenant purchase offers today, New York has a number of success stories of tenants buying their buildings and operating them as permanently affordable housing. Without TOPA, landlords have every incentive to sell their building to corporate landlords, resulting in skyrocketing rents, increasing eviction rates, and housing market consolidation.

We have seen many successful TOPA conversions in Washington DC, which has had the law on the books for over forty years. Cities like San Francisco have more recently passed similar bills. The laws give residents more control over where they live, create a pathway for social housing expansion, and help slow gentrification.

As Senator Myrie’s office aptly stated, “We’re facing a housing crisis and a historic exodus of Black people from Brooklyn — TOPA would go a long way toward reversing those trends.” (Curbed, 2023)

Anti Displacement NYC
Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)
Bailey's Cafe
Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union
Brownsville Partnership
Caribbean Equality Project
Carroll Gardens Association
Catholic Migration Services (CMS)
Center for NYC Neighborhoods
Chhaya Community Development Corporation
Churches United For Fair Housing
City Roots Community Land Trust
Citywide Tenant Union of Rochester
Community Allies
Community Service Society of New York
Cooper Square Community Land Trust
Cooper Square Committee
CWTU
East New York Community Land Trust
El Puente de Williamsburg
Equality for Flatbush (E4F)
For the Many
FWD Landscape
Genesee Co-op Federal Credit Union
Goddard Riverside
Grow Brownsville
Hester Street
HOPE
Housing Rights Initiative
Neighbors Together
New Economy Project
New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLII)
New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives
North Star Fund
NOT ONE MORE BLOCK
NWBCCC - Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
NYC YOUTH SPORTS PODCAST SHOW INC.
Open New York
Picture the Homeless
Pratt Center for Community Development
RENA (Riverside -Edgecombe Neighborhood Association)
TakeRoot Justice
Theatre of the Oppressed NYC
This Land Is Ours CLT
TIMBER
Tulinde, LLC
UHAB
United Neighbors Organization (UNO)
United Tenants of Albany
University City NYC
Unlock NYC
Urban Justice Center - Safety Net Project
Village Preservation
We Stay/Nos Quedamos
Western Queens CLT
Zara Tenant Coalition (ZTC)