

Racial Justice and the Right to Remain

The Case for Good Cause Eviction Protection

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Good Cause eviction laws protect tenants from excessive rent increases and arbitrary evictions. New York State's Good Cause Eviction bill, sponsored by Assemblymember Pam Hunter and Senator Julia Salazar, will positively impact some four million tenants in New York State. Good Cause gives tenants the right to remain, a fundamental need for families and a necessity for the long-term success of neighborhoods. Tenants will benefit across the state from Queens and Yonkers, to Rochester and Buffalo.

Passing Good Cause is crucial for bringing racial justice to housing, and will disproportionately benefit tenants of color, particularly Black tenants. More than two-thirds of Black families in New York State rent. Among renters, Black households are the most vulnerable to eviction, the most likely to experience discrimination from landlords, and the ones most likely to be displaced when neighborhoods change. High rents and gentrification have had a devastating impact on Black communities in New York State. Good Cause is an important step in promoting community stability and combatting displacement, both because it would extend protections for renters, among whom Black New Yorkers are over represented, and bolster the state's anti-discrimination laws.

Black Households In New York Are Three Times As Likely To Face Eviction As White Households

The expiration of New York State's eviction moratorium has many renters across the state worried. As of early January 2022, the

Census Bureau found that seven percent of New York State's renter households thought that they were likely to be evicted in the next two months. Housing instability is particularly acute for Black renters. Black households (13 percent) were twice as likely as Latinx renter households (6 percent) and three times as likely as white renter households (4 percent) to anticipate being evicted in the next two months.

NYC's Black Renters Are Twice As Likely As White Renters To Have Zero Dollars In Savings

Due to centuries of structural racism within the housing, lending, and job markets, Black New Yorkers tend to have far less in savings than their white neighbors, while paying more of their income in rent. Large rent increases, which are prevalent in gentrifying neighborhoods in cities across the state, are very likely to result in immediate displacement for Black households. Such increases would be challengeable under the Good Cause law.

While statewide data is not available, the [Community Service Society's 2021 survey](#) of New York City residents found that Black households were more than twice as likely as white households to have no savings to fall back on. White households were more than twice as likely as Black households to have over \$10,000 in savings. At the same time, across New York State, Black tenants are 10 percent more likely to be rent burdened than white households, according to the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).

Black Tenants In NYC Twice As Likely As White Tenants To Have Zero Dollars In Savings

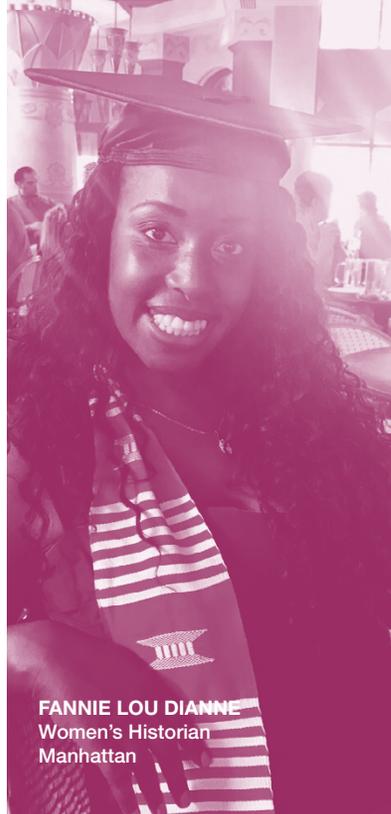
RAINY DAY SAVINGS BY RACE, 2021



Evictions filed at higher rates in counties with high shares of Black renters

COUNTY	RENTER HOUSEHOLDS	SHARE OF BLACK RENTER HOUSEHOLDS	EVICTION FILINGS 2020-21	SHARE OF RENTER HOUSEHOLDS FACING EVICTION FILINGS	GOOD CAUSE ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS
Bronx	404,617	36%	41,871	10%	100,032
Kings	669,935	35%	32,487	5%	228,021
Monroe	110,165	26%	5,623	5%	68,594
Westchester	134,818	25%	5,749	4%	70,242
Erie	138,002	25%	7,441	6%	88,497
Richmond	50,981	21%	3,184	6%	21,754
Albany	55,199	21%	2,513	5%	37,013
Onondaga	65,453	20%	2,311	4%	43,562
Schenectady	18,648	19%	1,304	4%	12,650
Dutchess	33,873	19%	1,556	8%	23,040
Rockland	31,847	17%	4,815	6%	19,461
Nassau	86,399	17%	1,294	3%	52,562
Orange	11,733	17%	21,526	5%	28,630
Queens	430,200	17%	529	2%	19,435
Niagara	25,976	16%	1,516	6%	16,115
New York	576,664	15%	24,257	4%	240,574

Sources: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year estimates; New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Eviction Filings; Ham, Kate. "Good Cause Legislation Would Protect 1.6 Million Households, Nearly 50% of Tenants Statewide." Community Service Society of New York, Sept. 29, 2021.



FANNIE LOU DIANNE
 Women's Historian
 Manhattan

“When I complained about substandard conditions in my apartment, I was illegally evicted in an act of retaliation. It took me years to get re-housed, and I am still dealing with the health impacts today.

I always knew that Black renters, especially women, are more likely to be evicted than white renters, but I never thought it would impact me as personally as it did.

Good Cause Eviction provides housing security to 1.6 million renter households in New York State and allows renters like me to organize for both better conditions in our buildings and broader tenants’ rights. We need this, New York needs this, and – most of all – renters of tomorrow need this.”

Counties With High Rates Of Eviction Filings Have High Shares Of Black Renters

While a majority of New York State’s housing is owner-occupied (54%), over two-thirds of Black New Yorkers are renters (69%). As a result, Black New Yorkers make up a disproportionate amount of the state’s renter households, comprising approximately 15 percent of overall households, but 22 percent of renter households. Counties that have high shares of Black renters, including the Bronx, Schenectady, and Monroe, have seen high shares of eviction filings over the past two years, while the eviction moratorium was in effect.

Landlords evict tenants not just to collect back rent, but also to retaliate against tenants who organize around bad conditions in their buildings.

Further, landlords use the fact that they are able to evict tenants without giving a reason to hide their discriminatory motives. It is not unusual to see new owners purchasing buildings in gentrifying communities, removing all of the tenants of color and replacing them with white gentrifiers. Good Cause requires landlords to evict only for a stated reason and removes the cover of no cause evictions. As eviction filings accelerate over the coming months, renters in all but eight counties in

New York State have no right to a guaranteed lease renewal, or protections against arbitrary evictions or unconscionable rent hikes. Good Cause would provide such protections to hundreds of thousands of Black renters across the state.

Conclusion

Rising rents, unscrupulous landlords, and gentrification have had a devastating impact on Black renters across the state over the last twenty-five years, leading to housing instability, evictions, and homelessness. While the eviction moratorium offered a temporary reprieve, familiar patterns that expose Black renters to greater risk, will return in the coming months. The consequences are far-reaching: residential instability is harmful to the health and well-being of children, families, and communities.

Good Cause eviction protection is one tool, among many, which is necessary for racial justice within the housing sector. When combined with rental assistance, like that provided in the proposed Housing Access Voucher Program, it will add a measure of much-needed stability to the lives of Black renters, protect Black communities from systematic displacement, and empower tenants to demand their rights to repairs, or to speak up against discrimination, without fear of retribution.



Housing Justice for All is a statewide movement of tenants and homeless New Yorkers united in our fight for housing as a human right. We believe that in the richest state in the richest country in the world we can eliminate evictions and end homelessness. We fight for tenant-and-homeless centered policy changes at the local, state, and federal level that advance that vision.

housingjusticeforall.org

The Community Service Society of New York (CSS) has worked with and for New Yorkers since 1843 to promote economic opportunity and champion an equitable city and state. We power change through a strategic combination of research, services, and advocacy to make New York more livable for people facing economic insecurity. By expanding access to health care, affordable housing, employment, opportunities for individuals with conviction histories, debt assistance, and more, we make a tangible difference in the lives of millions.



cssny.org

The Legal Aid Society is built on one simple but powerful belief: that no New Yorker should be denied the right to equal justice. We seek to be a beacon of hope for New Yorkers who feel neglected—regardless of who they are, where they come from, or how they identify. From our start over 140 years ago, our growth has mirrored that of the city we serve. Today, we are proud to be the largest, most influential social justice law firm in New York City.



legalaidnyc.org

Founded in 1963, the Pratt Center for Community Development works for a more just, equitable, and sustainable city for all New Yorkers. We combine participatory planning, community organizing, and public policy advocacy to support community-based organizations in their efforts to challenge systemic inequities and advance sustainable development.



prattcenter.net

The Urban Democracy Lab promotes critical, creative, just, and sustainable forms of urbanism through engaged scholarship, collaborative undergraduate and graduate coursework, creative public programming, and active publication. Our work focuses on new forms of urban democracy, whether in governance, activism, self-management, or creative production.



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