



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN**

**SCOTT M. STRINGER**  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer  
Statement at the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Social Services and the  
New York State Senate Standing Committee on Housing, Construction and Community Development  
On the New York City Section 8 voucher crisis  
April 15, 2010**

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Thank you Senator Squadron and members of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Services and the Senate Standing Committee on Housing, Construction and Community Development for holding this important hearing on the New York City Housing Authority's Section 8 voucher crisis.

Since the hastily called mid-December press conference when the Housing Authority announced the revocation of some 3,000 Section 8 vouchers already in circulation, the situation has deteriorated even further. Although the number of affected tenants and families with revoked Section 8 vouchers has been reduced to 2,600, the prospect of salvaging affordable housing for the remaining youth aging out of foster care, victims of domestic violence and homeless families with rescinded vouchers now looks increasingly unlikely.

It has also become apparent that current Section 8 attrition rates will not be sufficient to mitigate the impacts of NYCHA's decision to issue vouchers in excess of their funding levels. Without an achievable solution in the coming months, the consequences of the Housing Authority's mismanagement could result in watered-down benefits for thousands of current voucher holders or even complete Section 8 revocations for over 10,000 current tenants and families.

When this crisis first emerged, my office convened a meeting of elected officials, advocates, practitioners and concerned tenants to discuss ways to protect affected tenants and families. Following that meeting, a six-point plan was developed and presented to the public. To the collective dismay of the coalition that we had assembled, our plan was met with silence from the Housing Authority and the City. In fact, the only tangible acknowledgement of our proposal by the City came from the NYCHA Inspector General's office, which called to decline my request for a meeting to discuss this issue.

This go-it-alone approach by the Housing Authority and the City has predictably failed to solve the problem. With the dire prospect of additional Section 8 voucher terminations looming if a solution to this crisis cannot be achieved, the Housing Authority and the City should immediately begin discussions with elected officials, advocates, practitioners and concerned tenants to develop new ideas and reconsider previously proposed solutions.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the impact of the recently announced policy to begin charging working homeless families to pay rent while in shelters. Because the termination of up to 10,500 Section 8 vouchers remains on the table, it is plausible that families who lose their

Section 8 vouchers may be forced into the shelter system and required to pay higher rents in city shelters than they may be paying now in their current Section 8 supported living arrangement. We can not allow this to happen.

It is imperative that the state legislature redouble its efforts to repeal the 1997 state law that set this terrible policy in motion. Last year I strongly supported the efforts by you, Senator Squadron, along with Senators Diaz, Duane, Hassell-Thompson and Krueger to pass Senate Bill 5605. This legislation would have ended the New York State policy of charging rent to the employed homeless to stay in homeless shelters. Although S. 5605 died in the Senate and has been returned to the Assembly, it is clear that similar new legislation must be enacted so that New York State can return to being a defender, not oppressor, of the poor.

I stand ready to join the Bloomberg administration, housing advocates and members of today's State Senate panel in working towards a solution that will maintain fully funded Section 8 vouchers for all tenants who have, or were offered, vouchers from the New York City Housing Authority.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.