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August 27, 2020

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
New York State Senate Majority Leader  
188 State Street Room 907, Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Carl Heastie  
Speaker of the Assembly  
Legislative Office Building, Room 932  
Albany, NY 12248

**Re: Extending the Eviction Moratorium to Keep Thousands of New Yorkers in Their Homes and Stave off Homelessness Amid COVID-19**

Dear New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie,

As New York City's oldest and largest legal services provider representing low-income New Yorkers, we write to you as leaders of the New York State Legislature to raise a critical concern around the unprecedented wave of evictions that is forthcoming unless your respective chambers take vital action now.

We urge the Senate and Assembly to reconvene session immediately to advance legislative measures that would extend the eviction moratorium indefinitely. This would help mitigate the devastating consequences of the looming eviction crisis and keep tens of thousands – if not hundreds of thousands – of New Yorkers in their homes.

While infection rates in New York City are down, epidemiologists warn that a resurgence is all but inevitable as we loosen restrictions, including the current eviction moratorium, that have helped make New York safer.

If we allow evictions to take place at the cusp of a second wave – and right before the flu season and cold weather – we will be flooding homeless shelters, subways, and streets at the very moment where we need to keep people housed to mitigate the spread of the virus and avoidable deaths.

The prospect of evicting thousands of New Yorkers does not represent the progressive values of the State of New York. Moreover, it is well documented that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted low-income people of color. If you don't extend the moratorium, New Yorkers who were living on the brink of poverty before the crisis will face catastrophic consequences, including food instability and homelessness.

**Justice in Every Borough.**

This is not just a problem for residents of New York City. Many more families in upstate and western New York, who were already struggling before the pandemic hit, will find themselves in a similar situation once the moratorium expires.

You have a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable New Yorkers. This is not the time for inaction. The legislature has the power to enact a robust and meaningful moratorium on evictions to prevent an unprecedented housing and homelessness crisis that will devastate low-income families already struggling to get by and cost taxpayer dollars.

New York must take a stronger stand and match or surpass the tenant protections that other cities and states have enacted. For example, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Vermont, Washington and Washington D.C. have imposed eviction freezes that go beyond measures that New York has implemented. Seattle has an Executive Order that extends the eviction moratorium until December 31, 2020 or the end of the state of emergency, whichever is earlier. In New Jersey, all evictions are stayed until 60 days after the state of emergency is lifted.

Amid this unprecedented public health crisis, keeping New Yorkers in their homes is paramount and must be prioritized across the state. Once again, we urge the Legislature to reconvene session immediately to pass legislation to extend the eviction moratorium indefinitely. Please contact the undersigned if you have any further questions. Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adriene Holder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adriene Holder  
Attorney-in-Charge  
Civil Practice  
The Legal Aid Society