



COMPOSITE BY AMARON ROTHSCHILD/METRO

A crowd of Stuyvesant Town residents and local politicians rallied at the housing complex yesterday to call for more affordable housing preservation in the city.

With Stuy Town as backdrop, pols and residents call for housing law reforms

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STUYVESANT TOWN. To demonstrate they're mad as hell and not going to take anymore of the city's skyrocketing rents, housing and labor groups joined hundreds of tenants to make a human chain yesterday around Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village.

Dubbed "Hands Around

Stuy Town," the event was the kickoff of a new campaign, called "New York is Our Home," to reform housing laws, and it has the support of more than 50 city and state elected officials and 100 community organizations.

"The housing prices are one of the biggest problems we have in New York," said City Council Speaker Christine Quinn. She called for a repeal of the state's Urstadt law that takes rent regula-

tion control out of local elected officials' hands.

"We need to make sure we don't lose one more affordable apartment to slumlords," Quinn added, and that "we keep public housing public."

The campaign wants to repeal the \$2,000 threshold that allows landlords to exit the rent stabilization program and to prevent tenant harassment by strengthening enforcement of rent laws. It also seeks to preserve Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 housing.

City Comptroller William Thompson pointed to the brick buildings behind him and recounted the fight tenants and politicians waged to win the bid for the massive housing complex. Though they didn't succeed — and rents of deregulated apartments have reportedly soared since Tishman Speyer's \$5.4 billion purchase — Thompson said he and others are working to ensure affordabil-

Slipping away

Between 2002 and 2005, the city lost more than 200,000 apartments affordable to residents making \$35,000 or less, while median rents surged nearly 9 percent, according to reports from Housing Here and Now and the Furman Center.

ity of Starrett City, a 6,000-unit Mitchell-Lama complex that Clipper Equities LLC has offered to buy for \$1.3 billion.

Since 2002, more than 11,000 city-regulated Mitchell-Lama units left the program, according to the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, but that agency has been working to maintain affordability in those buildings and has been able to keep 20,000 from existing the system.

But Thompson lamented potential Mitchell-Lama losses. "Forty-thousand people are watching their homes change from affordable to no longer affordable," he said. "We need to stand up to make sure all New Yorkers can stay."