

Tenant

Housing for people, not profit

Inquilino

Vol 38, No. 3
March 2008

5 March 2008 — TENANT/INQUILINO

Tenants Take “Real Rent Reform” Campaign to Albany

By Jenny Laurie

Photos by Lucas Shapiro/West Side Neighborhood Alliance

The Real Rent Reform Campaign took its show on the road on March 4 with City Council Speaker Christine Quinn. Four busloads of tenants traveled to Albany to visit their legislators and hear Quinn speak about why restoring New York City’s home rule on rent regulations is crucial to preserving affordable housing.

Tenants also talked to their members of the Assembly and Senate about repealing vacancy decontrol, preserving affordability for tenants in Mitchell-Lama and project-based Section 8 buildings, and extending Mayor Bloomberg’s tax cuts for homeowners to tenants.

The day started with a rally led by Speaker Quinn and MC’d by Jackie Peters of the Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition. Tenants from the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan spoke of the need to repeal the Urstadt Law so that the City Council and the mayor could regain control over rent and eviction rules.

Doris Scott of Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) denounced speculators who were coming into her neighborhood in the Bronx to make rents unaffordable. Kenny Schaeffer of Met Council talked about how in 1971 when home rule was taken away, the median rent in the city was \$215 per month. With the Democrats’ victory in the Oswego state Senate special election, he added, “our time is coming on vacancy decontrol and other issues.” Marilyn Charles of DC37 reminded listeners that thousands of the union’s members were forced by city rules to live within the five boroughs—something that was getting harder and harder for many of them because of escalating rents.

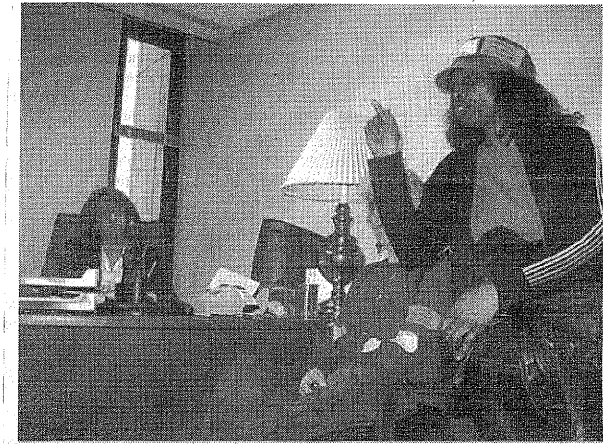
As the tenant lobbyists prepared to visit individual legislators, they were cheered on by State Senator Tom Duane and Assemblymembers Linda Rosenthal and Brian Kavanaugh.



State Sen. Liz Krueger (center, by door) meets with east side tenants and advocates.



Signing the visitors book at Speaker Silver’s office.



Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal listens to a tenant.