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Dear friends,

As you may have heard, legislators in Albany have been hard at work the last few weeks negotiating this year's state budget. Addressing the affordable housing crisis was a top priority in this year's talks, both for myself and many of my colleagues. This afternoon, [the Assembly voted on a housing package](#) designed to tackle the housing crisis. This comes [just a few weeks after I urged the Legislature to take an "all of the above" approach to the issue.](#)

As I wrote in my op-ed and as I've said many times before, we are in a housing crisis due to decades of inaction and it will take more than one budget to dig us out of the hole. [Listen to me speaking about the deal here.](#)



This deal, while by no means perfect, lays the groundwork to begin addressing the housing emergency. The best way to bring rent prices down is by increasing supply, and this budget will get shovels back in the ground through a new Mitchell-Lama program, incentives for affordable housing development and office conversions, and a significant investment in transforming currently vacant, state-owned sites into housing. [I spoke on the Assembly floor](#) about the need to develop these sites, particularly in regards to [Community Board 4's Housing Plan](#) that has a vision for New York's housing future.



All of these policies will vastly improve the housing market. However, we must recognize that building enough housing to outpace the unprecedented demand will take years. In the meantime, we must be doing more to keep current tenants secure in their homes and communities. For the first time in New York State history, rent protections for market rate tenants have been passed in the state budget. Just a few years ago, the idea of any Good Cause protections passing in New York was a pipe dream. We are where we are today because of the tireless work of so many tenants and advocates who made this happen. We took a historic step forward in ensuring that our state is equitable and livable for everyone.

Unfortunately, the version of good cause in this legislation is not good enough. I am concerned that there are so many questions about eligibility and enforcement of the law that I fear we will be waiting for court interpretation of which tenants are protected. While I am disappointed that this budget doesn't include the full slate of protections that were proposed, I am confident the Assembly majority will fight and build on this year's budget in future years until all tenants are safe from unconscionable rent increases and profit-driven harassment. We have so much more work to do to resolve the gaps and ensure everyone has a defense against shady landlords and ridiculous rent increases. Today is not the end of good cause; it's only the beginning.

Overall, this deal takes important steps that I am proud to support. Its historic nature means that we are laying a foundation for future legislative work, and we aren't wasting any time in coming to terms with the emergent nature of our housing market.

There is much more work to do in the coming years, and I will continue fighting for more affordable housing and a market that prioritizes tenants over wealthy landlords!

Tony