



OFFICE OF NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Kevin C. Riley

**STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER KEVIN C. RILEY ON
UNACCEPTABLE LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE ALLERTON-OLINVILLE NEIGHBORHOODS**

As the Council Member representing the Northeast Bronx, I am deeply concerned about the unacceptable living conditions reported by tenants of different multi-family buildings in the Allerton-Olinville section of the Bronx. The health, safety, and dignity of my constituents remain a top priority, and the troubling accounts of insufficient heat, lack of reliable cooking gas, and ongoing hazardous conditions demand immediate and decisive action.

Everyone deserves a safe and dignified home. We must always recommit to this, and back it up with action.

I am aware of the recent press coverage and tenant actions at 655 Burke Avenue located in Allerton-Olinville on Wednesday, December 4th. I stand by these tenants' right to organize, as has been tradition for almost a hundred years. The growth and evolution of this community is intertwined with neighborhood advocacy; and many of the protections that exist today were fought for and won by residents in this community. They ensured that they were heard; and we must hear these calls for change from tenants today.

What we must recognize is how challenging it can be to demonstrate a pattern of neglect. The lived experience of many tenants often involves intermittent and incomplete repairs, or inspections that fail to address the problem because too much time has passed. Tenants, in desperation, sometimes resort to unsafe measures—like using space heaters or stoves—to heat their homes. By the time an HPD inspector arrives, the temperature may have risen enough that it is not possible to prove the inadequate heating supply during the inspection. This cycle of neglect leaves tenants vulnerable and the problem difficult to address.



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To the tenants experiencing these issues – please reach out to us, and know you have an ally in me. My team is happy to help you make sense of these complexities. Whether it’s organizing the evidence you have, following up on reports – or even learning how to make reports for the first time; we’re there with you. We also work with a great coalition of local community partners like West Bronx Housing, Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corporation, Housing Court Answers, Met Council on Housing, and more. We held a Know Your Rights event in the neighborhood this summer, and we’re more than willing to work on another for those that missed it.

In the same breath, we also understand how difficult & time consuming work permits can be. We remain committed to advocating for reforms to these systems so that conditions don’t persist unnecessarily over paperwork issues.

To the landlord: If you are genuinely committed to addressing these issues and improving living conditions, my office is prepared to collaborate with you in the best interests of all parties involved. We have worked with many of our homeowners before who are dedicated to doing repairs to their properties and getting these issues resolved. We will be reaching out to facilitate meaningful progress.

However, if action is not taken promptly, we will have no choice but to pursue all necessary enforcement measures to ensure accountability. We will work to ensure that this situation is addressed comprehensively and that every family in our community can live in a safe, warm, and functional home.



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CONTINUED**

Unfortunately, we recognize that these issues are not isolated to building. Our office is actively collaborating with partners to address similar ongoing and new concerns raised by tenants of other multi-family buildings in the Allerton-Olinville neighborhoods and across District 12. If your building is experiencing issues that affect your quality of life, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office.

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