

Faith Leaders for the NYC Right to Counsel

December 13, 2016

Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker of the City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Mark-Viverito:

As Faith Leaders from many faith traditions from throughout New York City, we write to you to express our support for your efforts to address our city's crisis of homelessness and our critical shortage of affordable housing **and to urge you to exercise your leadership in the 2016 legislative session in making New York City the first city in the country to guarantee the right to legal counsel in housing court for tenants up to 200% of the poverty line.** With our homeless population at an all-time high, and the displacement pressures on New York's households, caused by rampant real estate development, increasing daily, **it is unacceptable that those who have helped make our city the great and diverse place that we love are forced out of their homes solely because they are unable to defend themselves in housing court.**

At the very heart of each of our faith traditions is the call to stand with those most in need. It is for this reason that faith leaders have endorsed the efforts to help prevent unwarranted rent increases, provide subsidies for homeless families departing the shelters, produce supportive housing for most vulnerable, and to provide over \$50 million for legal assistance in housing court which has resulted in a nearly 25% reduction in evictions. But despite these efforts, the number of homeless New Yorkers has continued to rise. As the City balances the need to produce more housing against the need to protect its residents from displacement, **we believe that the commitment of the Mayor's office and the City Council to ensure that its neighborhoods are preserved and existing residents are fully protected from preventable and illegal evictions is crucial to the life and health of the city we all love.**

As you know, many New Yorkers have expressed serious concern that the efforts to build and preserve 200,000 units of housing, and the rezoning and development that the plan calls for, will result in the displacement of many current New York City residents. **A strong commitment from the Mayor and City Council to enact Intro 214-A THIS YEAR along with other anti-displacement initiatives will send a powerful message to members of our congregations and the general public that this development will be balanced with a comprehensive and historic commitment to ensure that this new housing will not be developed at the expense of New York's low income and working class residents** - and will help to affirm the public's faith that New York City is truly committed to help all New Yorkers to live full and decent lives. **It's time to make history!** We look to both of you for your continued strong leadership on this issue.

In Faith,

Faith Leaders for the NYC Right to Counsel

Reverend Kenneth Alston, Jr. Elpida Community Church, Baptist
Rabbi Renni S. Altman, Associate Dean, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbinical Program
Reverend Elyse Ambrose, Associate Pastor, The Church of the Village
Reverend Gilder Anderson, Thessalonía Worship Center, Bronx, NY
Reverend Anne Auchincloss, Deacon, The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Manhattan
Reverend John Backe, Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, Staten Island
Reverend Reginald Bachus, Associate Pastor, Abyssinian Baptist Church
Kirk Barrell, President, Emmaus House-Harlem
Reverend Dr. Stephen Bauman, Senior Minister, Christ Church United Methodist
Chris Berry, Social Justice Committee Member, The Riverside Church
Reverend Elijah Bennett, New Mount Carmel Baptist Church
Maya Bhardwaj, Economic Justice Organizer, Faith In New York
Raj Bhushan, Past President, Sathya Sai Baba Center of Manhattan
Reverend Dr. Robert L. Brashear, Chair, Interfaith Assembly, Pastor, West Park Presbyterian Church, Manhattan
Reverend Yolanda Brown, Senior Pastor, Center of Destiny Christian Fellowship
Reverend Dr. Fred Burrell, Friendship Baptist Church, Bronx, NY
Reverend Dr. Joe Albert Bush, Pastor, Walker Memorial Baptist Church
Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director, New York State Council of Churches
Bishop James I Clark, Jr, Co-Chair, Mayor’s Clergy Advisory Commission
Reverend Beatrice M. Cowans, East Mount Olive Baptist Church
Reverend Dr. Charles A. Curtis, Pastor, Mount Olivet Baptist Church, NYC
Sister Carol De Angelo, Director, Sisters of Charity of New York, Peace and Justice
Reverend Karl A. Delk, President, Brooklyn Baptist Evangelical Union, Inc.
Reverend Keith Dennis, St. Luke Baptist Church, NYC
Swamini Sri Devi, President, Lalitamba Mandiram Ashram, Manhattan
Reverend James Duckett, Fort Motte Baptist Church
Mary Dugan, co-chair, Peace and Justice Taskforce All Souls Unitarian Church
Reverend Alistair Drummond, Pastor, West End Presbyterian Church, Manhattan
Reverend Dr. James Fairbanks, Editor, Saving Justice, Bronx
Reverend Ronnie Faison, Travelers Rest Baptist Church
Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Director, New York City Labor Religion Coalition
Reverend Ronald Fields, Member, Committee for Witness to Society and the World, Presbytery of New York City
Reverend John Flack, Pastor, Our Saviors Atonement
Reverend Paul B. Feuerstein, President/CEO, Barrier Free Living
Reverend Robert Foltz-Morrison, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of New York City
Marc Greenberg, Executive Director, Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing
Reverend Dr. Gwen Hadley Hall, Associate Pastor, Christ Temple Baptist Church
Reverend Ouida W. Harding, East Mount Olive Baptist Church
Reverend Arthur W. Harris, Pastor, Rescue Baptist Church, NYC
Reverend Peter Goodwin Heltzel, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology, Director, Micah Institute, New York Theological Seminary
Reverend Elijah Henry, New Zion Baptist Church
Adriane Hill, Director of Vocational Discernment, New York Theological Seminary
Reverend Isaiah Holland, Good News Baptist Church
Reverend Robert Jones, Jr., Second St. John Baptist Church
Reverend Jes Kast-Keat, Associate Minister, West End Collegiate Church, Manhattan

Very Reverend Patrick J. Keating, CEO, Catholic Migration Services
Reverend Wendy Kelly-Carter, Assistant Minister, Mount Olivet Baptist Church
Dr. Anne Klaeyen, Leader, New York Society for Ethical Culture
Reverend Martha Korienek, Associate Rector, Grace Church in New York
Reverend Clyde Kuemmerle, Executive Director, Ecclesia New York
Reverend Shepherd Lee, Pastor, Baptist Temple Church, NYC
Rabbi Ellen Lippmann, Kolot Chayeinu / Voices of Our Lives
Rabbi Marc Margolius, West End Synagogue, Manhattan
Carol Mcloughlin, LCSW, Chair Person, Social Justice Committee, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Queens
Reverend John Merz, Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Brooklyn
Reverend Frank Morales, Pastor, All Souls Episcopal Church
Reverend James Morrison, President, Baptist Ministers' conference of Greater New York and Vicinity
Reverend Patricia Moore, Assistant Minister, Mount Olivet Baptist Church
Reverend Eric D Mull, St John's Lutheran church by the Sea, Long Beach
Reverend Daiken Nelson, Founder and Guiding Teacher, Pamsula Zen Center
Roshi Enkyo O'Hara, Abbot, Village Zendo
Reverend James Osei-Kofi, Associate Pastor, Bethesda Healing Center, Brooklyn
Reverend Dr. Martha Overall, Priest, St. Ann's Church of Morrisania
Rabbi Shuli Passow, Director of Community Engagement, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun
Rosemarie Pace, Director, Pax Christi Metro New York
George Plagianos, Co-Director, AXIOS Eastern Orthodox LGBT Christians
Dr. Evelyn J. Perkins, Convent Avenue Baptist Church, Harlem, NY
Reverend Dr. Raymond Rivera, President, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Bronx
Reverend John Scott, St. John's Baptist Church
Tariq Shahid, Malcolm Shabazz Mosque
Bishop Andrew St. John, Rector, Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, Manhattan
Reverend Scott Stearman, Ph.D., Pastor, Metro Baptist Church, Manhattan
Dr. Diane Steinman, Director, NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform
Reverend S. Shinryu Thomson, Teacher, Village Zendo
Reverend Dr. Betty Spencer, Pastor, Lowly Nazarene Baptist Church
Reverend Isaac Stucks, Jehovah Jireh Baptist Church
Hemant Wadhvani, Hindu American Seva Charities
Reverend Dr. William L. Watkins, Jr., Abyssinian Baptist Church, NYC
Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW
Reverend Wells, Manhattan Baptist Church
Moshe Wiener, Executive Director, Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island
Reverend Denis K. Williams, Christian Universal Temple of Corona
Reverend Wayland Williams, Jr., Pastor, LaGree Baptist Church
Reverend Dr. Yvette Wilson-Barnes, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Union Theological Seminary
Reverend Helen Wingate, Greater Faith Baptist Church, Bronx, NY
Reverend Gloria Peters Wynn, Pastor, New Zion Pilgrim Baptist Church
Brother Anthony Zuba, Parochial Staff, Parish of Holy Cross – Saint John the Baptist

87 --- Organizational affiliations are listed for identification purposes only ---

For info about the Faith Leader Sign-on Campaign, contact Interfaith Assembly, Marc Greenberg, ED,
Marc@iahh.org, 917-913-0098/212-316-3171, iaah.org