

# NYC rent board approves 1.25% increase after two-year freeze

BY ERIN DURKIN

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Tuesday, June 27, 2017, 10:00 PM



The vote applies to leases that take effect between October 2017 and September 2018. (TURK\_STOCK\_PHOTOGRAPHER/GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO)

Tenants in the city's 1 million rent stabilized apartments will see their monthly payments rise 1.25 %, according to a vote by [Rent Guidelines Board](#) Tuesday.

Two-year leases will see a 2% jump by the board vote.

It's the first hike after two years of rent freezes by the board, whose members are appointed by [Mayor de Blasio](#).

The vote applies to leases that take effect between October 2017 and September 2018.

Tenants blasted the return to rent hikes.

"Without any more income, we have to pay more to the landlords who are getting richer and richer off our backs," said Althea York, 80, who lives in a rent stabilized apartment in the South Bronx.

The proposal passed by a 7-2 vote, with landlord reps opposing it.

Jack Freund, vice president of the Rent Stabilization Association, which represents landlords, called the increase "totally inadequate" to maintain the costs of upkeep.

"The mayor and this board are hurting the very tenants they say they want to protect," he said. "The ones who are going to suffer are the tenants."



A de Blasio spokeswoman said the last four years collectively have added up to the lowest increases in rent ever. (BARRY WILLIAMS/FOR NEW YORK DAILY NEWS)

But RGB tenant member Harvey Epstein said data show that over the last 25 years, landlords costs have gone up 151%, while rent increases totaled 187%.

"If you really have a problem open up your books. If you really have a problem show us the proof," he said.

Tenants, who had asked for a rent reduction, did the limbo at the front of the hearing room and chanted "how low can you go" as they waited for the meeting to start.

Board member Hilary Botein, whose remarks were drowned out by boos from the crowd, said while she sympathized with the pleas for relief, the change should come in state rent law — eliminating hefty rent hikes that are allowed when apartments become vacant and limiting increases for capital improvements.

"I understand people are incredibly angry and frustrated, but they should go up to Albany," she said.

De Blasio's spokeswoman Melissa Grace said the last four years collectively have added up to the lowest increases ever.

"We will never go back to the days when the landlord lobby got big rent hikes regardless of what the data said," she explained.

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