The Pratt Center for Community Development and the Community Service Society of New York (CSS) support good cause eviction protection (S3082/A5573), which would expand the fundamental right to a lease renewal to the vast majority of tenants in the state. A statewide Good Cause law can work with existing tenant laws and housing subsidy programs to create the conditions for more tenants to organize in their buildings (including buildings with mixed rent-regulated and unregulated apartments). Good Cause can also help limit speculation in rental buildings not covered by rent stabilization. Municipalities across the state, including Kingston, Newburgh, and Poughkeepsie have already passed local good cause legislation. California and Oregon passed their own versions of the law, called Just Cause, in 2021 and 2019, respectively. With a potential mass eviction crisis on the horizon, New York State should follow suit with full coverage Good Cause eviction protections.

To work as effectively as possible, Good Cause must have broad coverage. Means-testing or geographic carve-outs will shift market pressure onto excluded units or create an incentive for discriminatory practices in tenant selection.

Good Cause would protect 1.6 million households, (nearly half of tenants statewide), including:

- Over 70% of tenants in Tompkins County... where the median renter income is $32K
  - Broome
  - $26K
- Over 60% of tenants in Albany
  - $40K
  - Monroe
  - $32K
  - Erie
  - $32K
- Over 50% of tenants in Sullivan
  - $34K
- Over 40% of tenants in Queens
  - $55K
  - Richmond
  - $42K

Statewide median renter income: $44K

BY LEN AFRIDI, OKSANA MIRONOVA, AND SAMUEL STEIN
RESEARCH SUPPORT BY KATE HAM
Good Cause Eligibility in New York

Percent of renter households eligible for Good Cause by county

- 25–35%
- 35–45%
- 45–55%
- 55–65%
- 65–75%

Albany 67%  Allegany 71%  Bronx 25%  Broome 71%  Cattaraugus 70%  Cayuga 65%  Chautauqua 64%  Chemung 61%  Chenango 72%  Clinton 71%  Columbia 65%  Cortland 67%  Delaware 71%  Dutchess 68%  Erie 64%  Essex 70%  Franklin 62%  Fulton 66%  Genesee 66%  Greene 65%  Hamilton 71%  Herkimer 66%  Jefferson 64%  Kings 34%  Lewis 71%  Livingston 70%  Madison 70%  Monroe 62%  Montgomery 61%  Nassau 61%  New York 42%  Niagra 62%  Oneida 61%  Onondaga 67%  Ontario 67%  Orange 67%  Orleans 71%  Oswego 69%  Otsego 74%  Putnam 67%  Queens 45%  Rensselaer 72%  Richmond 43%  Rockland 61%  Saratoga 73%  Schenectady 68%  Schoharie 75%  Schuyler 69%  Seneca 68%  St Lawrence 63%  Steuben 67%  Suffolk 71%  Sullivan 59%  Tiogo 73%  Tompkins 73%  Ulster 66%  Warren 67%  Washington 70%  Wayne 61%  Westchester 52%  Wyoming 66%  Yates 55%
For example, high-rent thresholds would encourage landlords to drive up rents, repeating the dynamic created by the introduction of vacancy decontrol to New York State’s rent stabilization system, which contributed to the deregulation of nearly 291,000 apartments. When the vacancy decontrol loophole was introduced by the New York City Council in 1994, Housing Committee chair Archie Spigner noted that the average apartment in the city was under $600 ($1,125 in 2021 dollars), and that the likelihood of rents in New York reaching $2,000 was “rather remote.” In November 2021, median asking rents for 2-bedroom apartments on Streeteasy were above $2,000 in 96 percent of New York City neighborhoods.

Similarly, high-income carve-outs could incentivize landlords to select wealthier applicants for vacant apartments, even if a larger number of qualified lower-income tenants applied for the same units. However, good cause eviction protects tenants across the state, the majority of whom live in counties with a median income at or lower than the state median income of $68,486.

Many high-cost rentals house multiple families and multigenerational households

The vast majority of unregulated tenants in the state live in units that rent under $3K a month. About 5 percent (172,000 units), however, rent for more than $3,000. Eighty-six percent of high-priced units are located in Manhattan or Brooklyn. Five percent are in Queens, and the remainder are in the Bronx, Nassau, Suffolk, and Rockland counties.

While some residents of high-cost units are high-income renters, a significant proportion are multi-generational households, in which multiple workers often share responsibility for covering the rent. In Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland, and Bronx counties, half the residents of high-cost rentals are multi-generational households. In Queens, the proportion is one in three households, and in Brooklyn it’s one in five.

Many of these households are immigrant families. Forty percent of high-cost renter households in Queens speak a language other than English at home, as do more than 34 percent in Nassau, 36 percent in Suffolk, 25 percent in Manhattan, and 21 percent in Brooklyn.

In some parts of the state, high-cost rentals are paid for by multiple households sharing the same apartments. Nearly one in five tenant households in Manhattan and nearly one in three in Brooklyn include more than one family.

**Pratt Center and CSS recommend that the state legislature pass Good Cause with as much and as broad coverage as possible, in order to ensure the program is truly impactful and effective.** Means testing and carve-outs create incentives for landlords to prioritize higher income individuals as tenants, while leaving those households that need eviction protection without necessary protections. Those who stand to benefit most from Good Cause protection are low- and moderate-income tenants, immigrant tenants, and multi-generational households.

**Data Sources**

IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

American Community Survey 2019 (5-year) data

New York State Homes and Community Renewal

Furman Center Core Data

2017 NYC Housing Vacancy Survey

Founded in 1963, the Pratt Center for Community Development works for a more just, equitable, and sustainable city for all New Yorkers. As part of Pratt Institute, we leverage professional skills including participatory planning, community organizing, and public policy advocacy to support community-based organizations in their efforts to challenge systemic inequities and advance sustainable development.

The Community Service Society of New York (CSS) is an informed, independent, and unwavering voice for positive action on behalf of more than 3 million low-income New Yorkers. CSS draws on a 175-year history of excellence in addressing the root causes of economic disparity through research, advocacy, litigation, and innovative program models that strengthen and benefit all New Yorkers.