

Defienden programa de vivienda

Inquilinos protestan en Manhattan para preservar subsidio de la 'Sección 8'

GLORIA MEDINA/EBLP

Nueva York — Cientos de inquilinos se congregaron ayer en un parque de Manhattan para pedir al alcalde de la ciudad de Nueva York que les ayudara a que no se termine el programa de Sección 8.

Los manifestantes pedían a gritos que el alcalde actual o el que fuera electo en las próximas elecciones, de noviembre, los ayuden a que siguiera en efecto el programa de sección 8, que ofrece vivienda a bajo precio a personas de bajos recursos.

“Cada año más de mil inquilinos de bajos ingresos pierden sus apartamentos”, dijo Irene Baldwin, directora ejecutiva de la Asociación de Vecindarios y Desarrollo de Vivienda (ANHD), una coalición de 90 organizaciones comunitarias. Según Baldwin, se estima que en los próximos cinco años más de cinco mil personas queden sin vivienda. “Nuestro temor es que todas estas per-



PEDRO MENA

Cientos de inquilinos se manifestaron ayer en Manhattan a favor de que se preserven los beneficios de vivienda de la Sección 8.

sonas no van a tener a donde ir. Tenemos que mejorar y mantener lo poco que tenemos”.

“Queremos que nos renueven el contrato de sección 8 y los ‘landlords’ no quieren, ponen muchos pretextos”, dijo la costarricense Ania Alzate, quien vive en Manhattan. “Si el alcalde quiere nuestro voto, nos tiene que apoyar”.

La puertorriqueña Rosalinda Quiñonez, de 75 años, dijo que si no le renuevan el contrato de Sección 8 en enero, quedará en la calle junto a su nieta de la que está encargada.

“No entiendo porqué el gobierno da dinero para otros países y para la guerra

y no nos ayudan a vivir mejor aquí”, dijo Hilda Vanrhyn, de 74. “Primero la casa de uno y después los demás”.

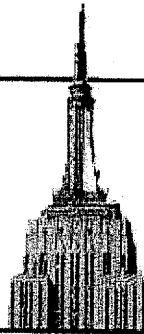
Más de 77,000 apartamentos de Sección 8 fueron construidos en los años de las décadas de 1970 y 1980 para personas de bajos recursos, pero se están venciendo los contratos y los dueños de los edificios están tratando de salirse del programa para poder cobrar alquileres de lujo, según Baldwin.

“Esta pérdida de apartamentos de alquiler módico hace crecer la división de nuestra ciudad entre vecindarios ricos y pobres”, dijo la directora ejecutiva de ANHD.

EL DIARIO

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THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING will be lit tonight with blue and white lights for United Nations Day.

DATA

14.37 Amount of rain, in inches, that has fallen in the city so far this month, making it the rainiest October ever recorded in New York City, according to the National Weather Service. The previous record of 13.31 inches was set in 1903. The wettest month ever recorded was September 1882, when 16.85 inches of rain fell. METRO/JRM

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Housing 'crisis' decried

At rally, residents, advocates blast officials for not protecting affordable housing in city

MCCAFFREY PARK Several hundred New Yorkers said they're in danger of being priced out of the city and losing their apartments in the next five years unless the next mayor saves affordable housing.

"Affordable housing is vanishing, it's gone," Irene Baldwin, executive director

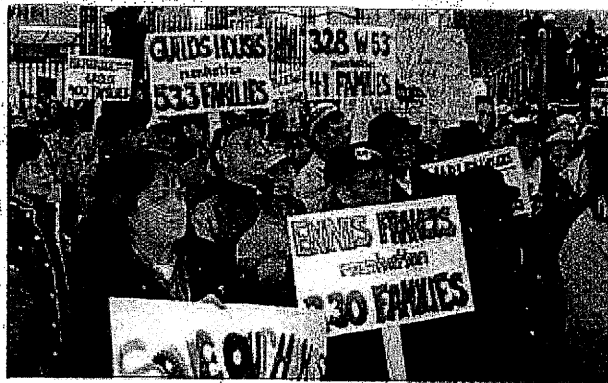
Your turn

Is enough being done to protect housing?

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of the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development non-profit group, said at a rally in Hell's Kitchen yesterday. "There's no housing anymore for working men and women or for poor people in this city."

Baldwin said 1,000 low-income apartments city-wide are lost annually when



PROTESTERS RALLIED in Hell's Kitchen yesterday to encourage the "next mayor" to save affordable housing.

owners choose to "opt-out" of a federal funding assistance program by the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development to charge market-value rents. And in the next five years, up to 35,000 low-income apartments, or Section 8 housing, could take that same path, she said.

"That's 35,000 New York City families that are going to lose their homes unless someone does something about it," Baldwin said. "We need to get our elected officials to step up to the plate."

In a brief speech to the rally, City Councilwoman Christine Quinn, D-Manhat-

tan, blasted Mayor Michael Bloomberg without using his name for vetoing Intro 186-A, known as the Tenant Empowerment Act. Under the bill, if the owner of a building in the Mitchell-Lama or Section 8 program wants to sell their property, they must give 12 months notice to tenants, who would then have first rights to purchase it at fair-market value. In August, the Council overrode Bloomberg's veto.

Quinn called upon "the next mayor" to fix the city's affordable housing crisis.

"Certainly [Bloomberg] is ahead in the polls, but three weeks is a lifetime in politics, so no one knows," Quinn said. "I think there's few issues more impactful on the electorate than housing. This issue could be very, very significant and could make a big difference as to

how the votes end up."

One tenant said she fears she'll be forced to leave her Section 8 apartment at 540 W. 52nd Street.

"The mayor needs to take a stand and say no more homes will be lost if I'm elected," Olga Pagan said. "Where will I go when I'm priced out?"

Jordan Barowitz, a Bloomberg campaign spokesman, praised the mayor's plan, which promises to build and preserve 165,000 units of affordable housing by 2013 at a cost of \$7.5 billion. The mayor also vowed to hold onto 37,000 units of Mitchell-Lama and other subsidized housing that are set to convert once government subsidies expire.



Ferrer unveils tax relief plan

QUEENS Citing Mayor Michael Bloomberg's 18.5 percent property tax hike in 2002 — the largest in the city's history — Democratic mayoral candidate Fernando Ferrer yesterday announced a plan to provide tax relief to homeowners and renters. Over the last four years, Ferrer charged, tax bills have jumped 62 percent on single-family homes and 43 percent on condos and co-ops. Under Ferrer's plan, 600,000 New Yorkers with homes valued under \$800,000 will save \$973 in taxes each year, while those with homes of higher value will continue to receive a \$400 rebate. Renters in regulated units who earn below \$60,000 and have at least one child will get their income taxes cut by an average \$295 a year. Ferrer said his plan would be paid for by reallocating the current property-tax rebate, using state funds and extending an existing surcharge on New Yorkers earning more than \$500,000 a year. METRO/PA