



LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

Mobilizing for Justice Since 1963

Update

December 2016

Right to Counsel Campaign Gains Momentum in City Council



Some 300,000 New Yorkers appear in Housing Court each year to fight an eviction. Ninety-seven percent of these cases are initiated by landlords, most of whom are represented by counsel. The vast majority of tenants are not represented by an attorney. As landlords employ ever more egregious tactics to force tenants out of rent-regulated apartments so they can increase rents or demolish buildings, increasing numbers of tenants find themselves with no alternative affordable housing. Eviction is the leading cause of homelessness and city shelters now house more than 60,000 people, one-third of whom are children. Approximately half of tenants who represent themselves in court are evicted; those with

attorneys win 90% of the time. At a seven-hour City Council hearing in September, 80 people, including former Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, testified, with none opposing the City Council bill that would provide a lawyer for low-income tenants. The [New York Times](#) has endorsed the bill, showing how saving low-income New Yorkers' housing will save the city money. All New Yorkers who care about affordable housing should join MFY in supporting City Council Intro. 214-A.

Fighting Medicaid Fraud: MFY and Advocates Call for Reforms of Substance Abuse Programs that Perpetuate Addiction and Homelessness

On December 14, 2016, MFY, other advocates and elected officials rallied at City Hall to demand that the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services act to end unsafe practices by substance abuse programs that perpetuate homelessness among vulnerable New Yorkers by illegally evicting or locking out residents who refuse to attend a treatment program chosen by the landlord. MFY has worked with a coalition of 17 organizations to [develop recommendations](#) to improve access to supportive and affordable housing for people leaving incarceration. At right, MFY Senior Staff Attorney Tanya Kessler, addresses the rally.



MFY in the News . . .

The New York Daily News reports on MFY's efforts to get [cooking gas restored for Bronx tenants](#) whose gas was shut off five months ago. MFY and other legal service providers have seen a surge in gas cutoffs in the Bronx.

MFY's recent report on [Airbnb's impact on the city's housing market](#) continues to generate discussion in the press.

The [New York Law Journal](#) reported on MFY Staff Attorney Alberto Gonzalez's successful motion to dismiss in ***1215 Realty LLC v. Khan***. There the court dismissed the landlord's eviction proceeding because the petition was not served at least 5 days before the proceeding was noticed to be heard, as required by RPAPL 733(1).