



Testimony
New York City Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings
Jointly with the Committee on Consumer Affairs and Business Licensing

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is among the largest and most influential business advocacy organizations in New York, having spent the last hundred years developing and promoting policies that drive economic development and advance its members' interests. The Brooklyn Chamber is the voice of Brooklyn's business community, offering the promotion, support and advocacy businesses need to continue creating jobs and opportunities in their communities.

We submit testimony today regarding Introduction 1912 of 2020 regarding the moratorium on evictions through April 21, 2021 or 7 months after the state or federal moratoriums on evictions expire. We understand that the purpose of this bill is to protect commercial and residential tenants. Here at the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce we have been working around the clock to help our small businesses weather the COVID-19 crisis and offer them the support, tools, and resources that they need to survive. We have seen firsthand how difficult it is for them cover basic expenses such as salaries and rent at a time when many have been mandated to close and others have been forced to pivot to a completely new business model that does not offer them the same amount as revenue.

Nonetheless, we believe Intro. 1912 will not help our businesses where it matters most – by offering them resources and support to keep their enterprises alive. It does not provide them financial relief from taxes or other payments owed to city government. In addition, it is unclear whether New York City government has the authority to revise the authorizing state law that permits marshals and sheriffs to enforce evictions and other civil judgments. Furthermore, eviction proceedings should be tied to state mandates regarding moratoriums on evictions. When the state re-authorizes evictions, every eviction still must go through a due process in civil court. Because of this process, we do not understand why the city would prevent eviction actions from taking place for 7 months or more past the time when the state has authorized evictions to take place.

Thank you for your consideration and for your support of New York City's small businesses.

Respectfully submitted:
Randy Peers, President & CEO