

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Village Rallies to Stop Closing Of Housing Office

Village of Hempstead Mayor Wayne J. Hall, Sr., the Board of Trustees, community leaders and tenants all gathered at Village Hall today to ask Governor David Paterson to overturn his proposal to close the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) office at 50 Clinton Street in Hempstead.

“We must fight this hardship to lower-income tenants,” said Mayor Hall. “I have personally written to Governor Paterson urging that he keep this office open. By closing the office in Hempstead, tenants will have to travel to Jamaica, Queens to file grievances about rent increases, evictions and repair and maintenance.”

In his executive budget submitted to the New York State Legislature, Governor Paterson proposed cuts to programs administered by the NYS Division of Housing and Renewal, which includes the closing of three district rent offices. The offices slated for closing are in Nassau County, Rockland County and Staten Island to save an estimated \$500,000.

Treasurer of the Tenants Political Action Committee Michael McKee stated, “Government can often be penny-wise and pound-foolish, and this proposed cut is a perfect example. Apart from the hardship this will mean for tenants in Nassau County, it will result in the loss of more of our scarce affordable rental housing, as landlords will have an easier time cheating tenants out of their rights and deregulating apartments. If we lose only two units in Nassau County per year, the savings to the state that will be realized by closing these three district rent offices represent the cost of constructing two new apartments to replace the units lost – and, of course, the inevitable loss will be much more than two apartments.”

Tenants of Nassau County rent-regulated apartments will have to travel to the Office of Rent Administration at Gertz Plaza in Jamaica, Queens if the Hempstead Office is to close. DHCR in Hempstead is in its third year of a ten-year lease and with many vacancies in the building the landlord may not agree to release the agency from its lease. The DHCR would then be paying rent for the next seven years for an empty office.

“Over 3,000 tenants in the Village of Hempstead alone could be affected by this decision. The proposed closing of 50 Clinton Street does not make sense fiscally and from a programmatic resident-directed service perspective,” added Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association Executive Director George Siberon.

Contact your State Senator at New York State Senate, Albany, New York 12247 or your State Assembly Member at New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248 to voice your opinion.

