



Rights Commissioner Sees No Need for Anti-discrimination Bills New York City

Nov. 10, 2017

Two controversial bills designed to ferret out discrimination by co-op and condo boards are opposed by the city's **Human Rights Commission** (HRC), according to testimony at a city council hearing this week. **Dana Sussman**, a deputy commissioner at HRC, told the city council's **Housing and Buildings Committee** that the commission is opposed to the two bills, known as **Intro 1458** and **Intro 1467**, because the number of co-op applicants who file discrimination complaints with HRC is negligible, and the commission is fully prepared to litigate any discrimination cases that arise.

Intro 1458 would require boards to provide a written statement laying out each of its reasons for rejecting a purchase application within five days of the decision. The bill would require boards to provide information and statistics that led to the rejection. Failure to comply with the statute could result in fines up to \$25,000. Intro 1467 requires co-op boards to inform purchase applicants of their decision on an application within 45 of receiving the application. This bill would also allow the levying of fines up to \$25,000.

The two bills are co-sponsored by council members **Jumane Williams** and **Brad Landers**, who both attended the hearing.

After Sussman testified, a contingent from the **Presidents' Council of Cooperatives & Condominiums** (PCCC) voiced their strong opposition to both bills. **Bob Friedrich**, a PCCC member and board president at Glen Oaks Village co-op in Queens, said the proposed legislation is "a solution in search of a problem." **Geoffrey Mazel**, the PCCC legal counsel, added that co-op purchasers who believe they've been discriminated against have a "free bite of the apple in that they can go to multiple city, state and federal agencies and bring an administrative claim without a lawyer and at little or no cost."

Following their testimony, a lively, hour-long exchange ensued between PCCC members and the bills' sponsors. When it ended, council member Williams, who chairs the Housing and Buildings Committee, said he would review the legislation's punitive measures.