

Coalition Urges City to Pass Intro 1529 to Fund Tenant Organizing Following Release of New Right to Counsel Zip Codes

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Contact:

- Susanna Blankley, 917-691-0544, susanna@righttocounselnyc.org

New York, NY—Today, as the city announces the expansion of its Right to Counsel law, the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition is calling for the passage of Intro 1529 to fund tenant organizing so that more eligible tenants know about this right and use it to defend their homes.

The Coalition is excited that the Office of Civil Justice today released five new zip codes in which Right to Counsel will now be implemented: 10453 in the Bronx, 11207 in Brooklyn, 10029 and 10034 in Manhattan, and 11691 in Queens. This brings the total number of zip codes where Right to Counsel is in effect to 25. The law is currently being phased in and will be citywide by 2022.

Since its passage, data from the Office of Civil Justice has shown that 84 percent of tenants who had a lawyer through Right to Counsel were able to remain in their homes. As the law gets one step closer to full implementation, the Coalition is looking to the future to make sure the law is as effective as possible by urging the city to pass [Intro 1529](#). This bill would require the city to support trusted tenant organizing groups to inform tenants about their Right to Counsel and support them in using it.

“With more zip codes having the Right to Counsel, we need more organizers than ever to let tenants know about and help them use this right,” said Randy Dillard, tenant leader with Community Action for Safe Apartments in the Bronx. “Organizers from neighborhood groups need to do this work because that is who our communities trust. If people don’t know they have this right, some of them won’t make it to housing court. Some people will just move out. If they knew they had this right, we wouldn’t lose them to the system or to the shelters.”

A survey done by volunteers at Bronx Housing Court found that 53 percent of tenants who were eligible for the Right to Counsel didn’t know before arriving in court. Meanwhile, 77 percent of these tenants had needed repairs and 38 percent faced landlord harassment.

“If tenants don’t know they have a Right to Counsel when facing eviction, they are more likely to not show up to housing court or make a deal with their landlord’s lawyer before learning that they have this right, which has happened,” said Lauren Springer, tenant leader with Catholic Migration Services in Queens. “And even before facing an eviction, we need tenants to know they have this right because this makes them more confident in fighting for repairs, fair treatment, and their other rights as tenants. When they know that they’ll have a lawyer if their landlord tries to retaliate and bring them to court, they are more likely to fight for the homes they deserve.”

The Right to Counsel law was passed in 2017, making it a right for low-income tenants to have an attorney when facing an eviction in housing court. With its proven success, the Coalition is now pushing their [campaign](#) to expand the law by passing [Intro 1529](#) as well as [Intro 1104](#), which would double the law’s income eligibility level.

The [Right to Counsel NYC Coalition](#) is a broad-based coalition of tenants, community organizers, legal service providers, academics, and more. In 2017, the coalition won a 3-year campaign to make it a right for low-income tenants to have an attorney when facing an eviction in housing court. NYC became the first city in the nation to win this right. The coalition continues to organize for a just implementation and expansion of the law.