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I N   S E N A T E

March 3, 2016

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Introduced by Sen. STEWART-COUSINS -- read twice and ordered printed,  
and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Judiciary

AN ACT to amend the real property law, in relation to prohibiting the  
termination of tenancy in certain housing occupied by senior citizens  
and/or persons with disabilities

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-  
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1. The real property law is amended by adding a new section  
2     228-a to read as follows:  
3     S 228-A. TENANCY IN RENTAL BUILDINGS; SENIOR CITIZENS; PERSONS WITH  
4     DISABILITIES. 1. NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION TWO HUNDRED  
5     TWENTY-EIGHT OF THIS ARTICLE OR ANY OTHER PROVISION TO THE CONTRARY, IF  
6     SUBSTANTIALLY ALL OF THE LESSEES OR TENANTS OCCUPYING UNITS IN A RENTAL  
7     BUILDING ARE OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE AND/OR ARE PERSONS WITH DISA-  
8     BILITIES, THE LESSOR MAY NOT TERMINATE OR FAIL TO RENEW A LEASE FOR  
9     PREMISES IN SUCH BUILDING OR TERMINATE A TENANCY AT WILL OR AT SUFFER-  
10    ANCE, EXCEPT FOR CAUSE SUCH AS THE NON-PAYMENT OF RENT, WITHOUT THE  
11    PRIOR APPROVAL OF A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION.  
12    2. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY PROVISION TO THE CONTRARY, A LESSOR OF A RENTAL  
13    BUILDING WHERE SUBSTANTIALLY ALL OF THE LESSEES OR TENANTS OCCUPYING  
14    UNITS IN THE RENTAL BUILDING ARE OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE AND/OR ARE  
15    PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY NOT INCREASE THE RENT IN SUCH RENTAL  
16    BUILDING BY MORE THAN ONE PERCENT ABOVE THE PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN THE  
17    CONSUMER PRICE INDEX SINCE THE START OF THE TENANCY OR MOST RECENT  
18    RENEWAL, WHICHEVER IS MORE RECENT AT THE TIME OF RENEWAL OF A LEASE AND  
19    MAY NOT INCREASE THE RENT MORE THAN ONE TIME ANNUALLY.  
20    3. EVERY LESSOR OF RENTAL BUILDINGS WHERE SUBSTANTIALLY ALL OF THE  
21    LESSEES OR TENANTS OCCUPYING UNITS ARE OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE  
22    AND/OR ARE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, SHALL NOTIFY PROSPECTIVE TENANTS  
23    OF THE PROVISION OF THIS SECTION. SUCH NOTICE SHALL BE IN WRITING, UPON  
24    THE RENTAL APPLICATION, AND SHALL INCLUDE, IN PLAIN AND SIMPLE ENGLISH,  
25    IN CONSPICUOUS PRINT OF AT LEAST EIGHTEEN POINT TYPE, AN EXPLANATION OF  
26    A TENANT'S RIGHTS UNDER THIS SECTION AND ALL OTHER APPLICABLE REQUIRE-  
27    MENTS AND DUTIES RELATING THERETO.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

LBD13724-06-6

1 SUCH NOTICE SHALL READ AS FOLLOWS:

2 NOTICE TO SENIOR CITIZENS AND/OR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:  
3 BUILDING TENANCY

4 SECTION 228-A OF THE REAL PROPERTY LAW OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
5 PROHIBITS A LESSOR FROM TERMINATING OR FAILING TO RENEW A LEASE OR  
6 TENANCY FOR PREMISES IN CERTAIN HOUSING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AND/OR  
7 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, EXCEPT FOR CAUSE.

8 (CONSULT SECTION 228-A OF THE REAL PROPERTY LAW FOR SPECIFIC  
9 INFORMATION AND CRITERIA.)

10 4. ANY LESSOR WHO VIOLATES THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE  
11 LIABLE TO THE LESSEE OR TENANT AFFECTED THEREBY FOR REASONABLE COSTS,  
12 INCLUDING REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES, WHICH FEES SHALL BE TAXED AND  
13 COLLECTED AS A PART OF THE COSTS IN THE ACTION, AND FOR THE REASONABLE  
14 EXPENSES INCURRED BY THE AFFECTED LESSEE OR TENANT IN RELOCATING TO A  
15 NEW RESIDENCE. ADDITIONALLY, LESSORS SHALL RETURN INITIATION FEES AND  
16 SECURITY DEPOSITS TO LESSEES OR TENANTS, WHERE APPROPRIATE. AN ACTION  
17 TO RECOVER FOR SUCH LOSS, DAMAGE OR INJURY MAY BE BROUGHT IN ANY COURT  
18 OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION BY THE AFFECTED TENANT OR LESSEE.

19 5. AS USED IN THIS SECTION:

20 (A) "LESSOR" MEANS THE OWNER OR LANDLORD OF A RENTAL BUILDING, OR HIS  
21 OR HER AGENT;

22 (B) "PERSON WITH A DISABILITY" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS CURRENTLY  
23 RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE (SSDI) OR SUPPLEMENTAL  
24 SECURITY INCOME (SSI) BENEFITS UNDER THE FEDERAL SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OR  
25 DISABILITY PENSION OR DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS PROVIDED BY THE  
26 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OR THOSE PREVIOUSLY ELIGI-  
27 BLE BY VIRTUE OF RECEIVING DISABILITY BENEFITS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL  
28 SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM OR THE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY PROGRAM AND  
29 CURRENTLY RECEIVING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS BASED ON DETERMINATION  
30 OF DISABILITY AS PROVIDED IN SECTION THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX OF THE  
31 SOCIAL SERVICES LAW;

32 (C) "RENTAL BUILDING" MEANS TWENTY OR MORE RESIDENTIAL UNITS; AND

33 (D) "SUBSTANTIALLY ALL" MEANS APPROXIMATELY EIGHTY PERCENT OR MORE OF  
34 THE LESSEES OR TENANTS OCCUPYING UNITS IN A RENTAL BUILDING, PROVIDED  
35 THAT THE COURT NEED NOT RELY ON A STRICT PERCENTAGE WHEN, IN ITS DETER-  
36 MINATION, THE INTERESTS OF JUSTICE WARRANT IT.

37 S 2. This act shall take effect immediately.