

# NEWS FROM

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**Carl E. Heastie**  
Speaker



“In my first session as the Speaker of the Assembly, I am proud to say that we stood strong and succeeded in extending our rent regulation laws while increasing protection for our most vulnerable populations.”

– Carl E. Heastie

Dear Neighbor(s):

I would like to thank you for all of the encouragement and support I have received from our community during my first session as Speaker of the New York State Assembly. I am very proud of all the great things we have accomplished during this legislative session. It is your support and strength that has allowed me to achieve this historic accomplishment.

At the start of this legislative session, the Assembly Majority pledged to stand strong for New York’s families. We pledged to fight for improved protections for tenants living in rent-regulated apartments and to stop an ill-conceived tax credit that would allow billionaires to invest in private schools instead of paying those amounts in taxes. We remain dedicated to giving working families the resources they need to achieve financial independence.

I am proud to say that we stood strong and succeeded in extending our rent regulation laws while increasing protection for our most vulnerable populations. We passed legislation to combat sexual assault on college campuses, making our campuses safer for our students. We passed a budget that provided for our neediest citizens with significant increases in education and health care funding. We were able to invest in affordable housing.

There is still much work to be done. The Assembly Majority, and myself, will continue to make certain New York remains committed to providing the opportunities for success our families deserve. As always, if there is any way that I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me. My office is here to serve you.

With Love and Hope,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carl E. Heastie".

Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker

## Speaker Carl E. Heastie saves and improves rent regulations to protect New Yorkers



Speaker Carl E. Heastie successfully negotiated with the Governor and Senate legislation to extend rent regulations for four years, strengthen protections for tenants, increase affordable housing units and invest in education (A.8323 Heastie/Ch. 20 of 2015). The Assembly Majority is committed to ensuring access to affordable housing through rent regulations because it is critical to keep middle- and low-income families in their homes. New York City is unique – a community of social, economic and cultural diversity. It must remain a place that all families can call home – not just the wealthiest.

Understanding this, the Assembly Majority knew the importance of fighting hard to continue rent regulation. We fought to maintain affordable housing and ensure that families and older adults would not be priced out of their homes or their communities.

**“Our top priority is to help the hardworking families who make New York great,” said Speaker Heastie. “This agreement extends rent regulations that so many families rely on to stay in their homes.”**

There are more than 1 million rent-regulated apartments in New York City, which provide affordable housing for hundreds of thousands of middle- and low-income families. The legislation passed by the Assembly will extend existing rent laws for four years, helping prevent families from being priced out of their homes.

In order to protect and preserve affordable housing, the legislation also increases the vacancy deregulation threshold. Currently, apartments that become vacant with monthly rents over \$2,500 may be deregulated upon vacancy. By raising the threshold to \$2,700 and requiring that it be indexed to future increases according to the Rent Guidelines Board, the legislation ensures more housing units can remain affordable.

“Too many hardworking New Yorkers are struggling to afford housing for their families as rents continue to skyrocket,” said Carl E. Heastie. “These measures will help ensure that families can continue to call the Northeast Bronx home.”

The legislation also protects tenants by increasing the penalty for landlords who harass tenants or violate a Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) order.

The new law also extends the Major Capital Improvement (MCI) repayment period to limit the financial impact of building improvements on rents. Stretching the major capital improvement (MCI) payment schedule from 84 months to 96 months for buildings with 35 and fewer units, and to 108 months for buildings with more than 35 units, is a key change to help tenants keep more money in their pockets.

In an effort to keep rents from skyrocketing, the Assembly also negotiated a cap for the amount by which a landlord can increase the rent when a tenant with preferential rent leaves the apartment. Such increase will depend on how long the previous tenant stayed in the apartment.

### If a previous vacancy lease commenced:

- **Less than 2 years ago, the vacancy increase would be capped at 5 percent;**
- **Less than 3 years ago, the vacancy increase would be capped at 10 percent;**
- **Less than 4 years ago, the vacancy increase would be capped at 15 percent; or**
- **4 or more years ago, the vacancy increase would be capped at 20 percent**

## Assembly Speaker Heastie wins improvements for education

The legislative agreement also takes steps to reform educational policies and address the concerns of parents and teachers, including extending mayoral control of New York City’s schools for one year.

Past standardized test questions will now be available for review, and teachers will no longer be prohibited from discussing tests after they have been publicly released, giving teachers the ability to better prepare students for future exams. In addition, the State Education Department will be required to review certain standardized test questions to ensure they are fair and grade-level appropriate. Teacher evaluations will also need to take into account several factors that can affect student performance, including poverty, English language learner status, disability and prior academic performance.

Also, \$250 million will be provided to nonpublic schools over the next two years to help private and parochial institutions cover the costs of state-mandated services, while maintaining educational choices for parents.

“It’s absolutely essential that we make every effort to give New York’s children a high-quality education,” said Carl E. Heastie. “We’ve heard the concerns of parents and teachers, and we’re working every day to improve our education system so all children have the opportunity to succeed.”

## Speaker Heastie announces agreement to expand access to affordable housing and create good-paying jobs

The 421-a Property Tax Exemption Program encourages the new construction of affordable housing in New York City. The program will be extended for four years, under the condition that a prevailing wage requirement for construction workers be negotiated within six months. If no understanding between developers and laborers can be reached within the six-month period, the program will be suspended until an agreement is reached.

Additionally, on-site affordability will be required for all buildings constructed under the 421-a program and more incentives options will be offered to developers to broaden their ability to provide affordable housing. Tax breaks for condos and co-ops will also continue for four years, as well as the J-51 Tax Abatement Program, which gives landlords an incentive to renovate and make improvements to their buildings.

In addition, the Loft Law, which protects New York residents who live in buildings formerly zoned for commercial use, will be extended for four years. This extension will allow smaller units to be covered under the law, prohibit coverage on units with outstanding hazards, reduce rent increases for making a unit comply with building and fire code and allow review of buildings that may contain incompatible uses. The legislation also expands the application period for registration of new residential units for an additional two years.

“Working and middle-class families are the backbone of New York City, and it’s critical that we make sure they can continue to live, work and raise their children here,” said Speaker Carl Heastie. “Strengthening rent laws and providing incentives for developers who invest in affordable housing and new businesses will help secure a bright future for our city.”



Speaker Carl Heastie receives an award from Councilman Andy King as community leader Jamaal Bailey, the Master of Ceremonies for the event, looks on.

## Northeast Bronx gathers to celebrate Carl Heastie’s selection as the first African-American Speaker of the New York State Assembly

On April 25, 2015, the Northeast Bronx community celebrated Carl Heastie’s ascension to Speaker of the New York State Assembly with Governor Cuomo and leading elected officials. Leading members of city and state government gathered to express their support for Carl Heastie as he assumed his new role as leader of the Assembly. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli and a host of other elected officials took the occasion to join family members and community leaders to reminisce on Speaker Heastie’s career in public service.

The afternoon of celebration was highlighted by a performance by dancers from the Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center. After the performance and greeting, attendees enjoyed dinner and refreshments.



Dancers from Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center performed a dance routine at Speaker Heastie’s Community Celebration.

## Speaker Heastie joins former Knick John Starks to mentor youth



Speaker Carl Heastie and former Knick basketball player John Starks mentor students from the Baychester Academy at JHS 144.

On May 1, 2015, Carl Heastie and Knicks legend John Starks took time out of their schedules to spend the afternoon mentoring local youth with an afternoon of basketball and leadership skills. Throughout the event, Speaker Heastie spoke with young athletes to help them recognize their priorities and reach their potential.

The New York Knicks, in partnership with Cablevision, sponsored a basketball clinic for approximately 75 students from the Baychester Academy at JHS 144, the Michelangelo School, located at 2545 Gunther Avenue in the Bronx. Speaker Heastie, a proud alumnus of JHS 144, was on hand with former Knick John Starks, who took photos with and signed autographs for the students.

In addition to working up a sweat and receiving solid instruction on the basic fundamental skills of basketball, the students also received sound advice about good sportsmanship, healthy living and teamwork – on and off the court.

Speaker Heastie was asked by one of the students of Baychester Academy what was the best advice that he could give to young people, and the Speaker said, “Whatever your goal is, whatever you want to be in life, shoot for it, work hard and try to achieve it.”

**“Our young people need to realize that the sky is the limit. If they get an education and apply themselves, they can achieve anything,” said Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.**

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## News from



**Carl E. Heastie**  
Speaker

“I am deeply humbled by the support the community has given me throughout my entire life. The encouragement I get from my family and neighbors has always given me the inspiration and guidance I needed to represent our community with the strength the residents deserve.”

– Speaker Carl E. Heastie