



Defend RTC

Statewide Legislation S3254 / A4993

Our Statewide Defend RTC Bill would protect and uphold NYS tenants' Right to Counsel by mandating that tenants who may be eligible for an attorney in housing court be given the time that they need to be connected to full representation.

What Does this Bill Do?

In jurisdictions where tenants have a Right to Counsel- [Currently, this applies to New York City, Westchester] this bill would:

- Require that the courts tell tenants about their ability to obtain free legal counsel
- Require the courts to provide repeated adjournments of at least 30 days each until a tenant is able to get an attorney. An adjournment means a case is postponed until a future date.

Why is it Necessary?

- Right to Counsel is an effective law that keeps tenants in their homes: 86% of tenants with a RTC attorney in NYC were able to stay in their homes
- This law is most effective if tenants are given the opportunity and time to retain an attorney.
- The New York State Courts are not bound by local laws. Right now in NYC, there aren't enough attorneys to take all eligible cases at the pace the courts have set. Instead of mandating adjournments to slow down the pace of cases the courts are instead moving cases forward without tenants getting RTC.
- This state law would require the courts to uphold Right to Counsel where it is local law by mandating repeated adjournments until tenants can get an attorney to represent them, as provided by local law.
- Evictions should not move faster than any other type of civil court case and a landlord's urgency to evict should not be prioritized over a tenant's right to an attorney.



More Info: www.righttocounselnyc.org/defend_rtc



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We Know RTC Works!

- In 2017, New York City became the first city in the country to pass Right to Counsel. Since we passed RTC, evictions have dropped by more than 40%.
- RTC is proactive: Landlords sued tenants less, more tenants showed up to fight their cases and evictions dropped. RTC changes landlord and tenant behavior because it changes the balance of power.
- We also surveyed tenants across the city and found that RTC helps tenants organize to demand repairs and other rights.
- Right to Counsel enforces and upholds tenants' rights, giving tenants the power to organize and fight back, making it harder for landlords to skirt tenant protections.

Right to Counsel Must be Defended!

Who We Are

The Right to Counsel NYC Coalition (RTCNYC) is a tenant-led coalition that formed in 2014 to change Housing Courts, prevent displacement, and stop the eviction crisis that threatens our families, our homes, and our neighborhoods. RTCNYC is made up of tenants, organizers, advocates, legal services organizations and more! In 2017, after a three-year grassroots campaign, the Coalition won the Right to Counsel, making New York the first city in the country to establish a Right to Counsel for low-income tenants facing eviction. Now, in coalition with our upstate partners, the Coalition is excited to fight for Right to Counsel statewide and create an eviction free New York!



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