

October 27, 2022

New Data Shows Tens of Thousands of Tenants are Being Denied Right to Counsel

New York, NY– Today, thanks to work with our partners at ANHD and the Housing Data Coalition, we are releasing our [NYC Eviction Crisis Monitor](#). This monitor shows the percentage of tenants that have been denied Right to Counsel (RTC) and the number of tenants that have been evicted since the COVID eviction protections ended in January.

- **17,000 tenants, or two thirds of all of the tenants in court, have been denied this crucial right.** The number of tenants who have an attorney is decreasing every month.
- **2,500 households have been evicted.**
- Of the 17,000 tenants facing eviction alone, **more than 12,000 of them are in the Bronx and Brooklyn.**
- **The vast majority of tenants who are being denied RTC and who are being evicted are Black and brown.**

These numbers represent an absolute violation of justice that has devastating consequences. In the wake of a national labor shortage and the failure of the state legislature to renew the eviction protections, the courts are moving eviction cases forward at a pace that surpasses the capacity of RTC lawyers to represent them. Instead of slowing down the court process to respond to the current reality, [as we've repeatedly called for](#), the court has chosen to deny tenants their right to counsel.

When RTC was in full effect, its success was powerful: evictions plummeted, landlords sued tenants less and 84% of tenants who had Right to Counsel stayed in their home. **Denying tens of thousands of tenants the most powerful tool they have in court to defend their homes, especially at this moment in history, is a blatant act of injustice and discrimination on the part of the courts.**

When NYC first passed this law in 2017, it was celebrated as the history making, game changing law that it was and is. **NYC Mayor Adams and City Council need to step up to protect and uphold Right to Counsel for NYC tenants.**

"We fought hard for Right to Counsel to keep tenants in their homes. It was working. I know firsthand the power of RTC. It's devastating to see how the courts are just ignoring the law. These numbers are shocking and upsetting. And they aren't just numbers, they are tenants, families, and our neighbors. I can't believe our city and state governments are letting the courts deny tenants a right they have guaranteed in the law. I'm calling on the courts and our electeds to stop this now. Not one more tenant should be denied RTC." **-Randy Dillard, CASA Leader and Right to Counsel NYC Coalition Steering Committee Member.**

"Tenants need support, we need housing and we don't want to lose any more homes! Landlords harass families with court cases and tenants don't even know they have rights because instead of the courts educating tenants on their rights, they're denying tenants their rights. That's why RTC is very important, tenants can't fight back without it, just look at the numbers." **-Fidele Albert, Flatbush Tenant Coalition Leader**

"Since eviction protections ended January 15, ANHD's members and partners have been sounding the alarms that evictions are moving forward without tenants getting Right to Counsel attorneys. There simply aren't enough providers to keep up with the pace that the courts are calendaring cases, meaning that the courts are denying tenants a right that the tenant movement fought so hard to secure. We looked into the numbers to understand the scale of the problem, and they were shocking. The fact that two-thirds of tenants are facing eviction without a lawyer, tens of thousands of tenants in under a year, is horrifying. It's undoing all the work we've done to stabilize tenants before and during the pandemic. It's not right, and we need the courts to fix it." **-Lucy Block, Senior Research and Data Associate, Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)**

“Tenant leaders fought for years and won the right to counsel. But today, over our hotline and at our information tables in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens courts, we are talking to tenants who cannot get attorneys in their eviction cases. We are talking to tenants every day who we know could save their apartments with legal representation – and who will almost certainly get evicted without counsel.” -**Jenny Laurie, Executive Director, Housing Court Answers.**

“Across our city housing courts, tenants of color impacted by the pandemic are fighting to stay in their homes. They should have tenant lawyers standing beside them, raising critical defenses, securing repairs, addressing rent overcharges, and putting a stop to landlord harassment. Instead most tenants are forced to move forward in their cases without a lawyer, oftentimes not understanding their rights and defenses. This is not inevitable. By denying tenants access to right to counsel, our courts are choosing to prioritize landlord profits over tenant homes, they are choosing evictions and homelessness over keeping people safely housed. - **Marika Dias, Managing Director, Urban Justice Center’s Safety Net Project**

“New York City led the nation by being the first jurisdiction to enact a right to counsel for tenants facing eviction. Across the country, the seventeen cities and states with a similarly-enacted right have frequently looked to NYC for guidance on how to effectively implement a right to counsel. This shocking data, however, shows that NYC’s courts are neither delivering on the promise of right to counsel nor setting an example for the rest of the country. And given that other data has shown the presence of an attorney in NYC courts has a dramatic impact on tenants’ long-term housing stability, this failure wreaks very real harm upon vulnerable communities, particularly Black and Brown communities, across NYC.”
John Pollock, Coordinator, National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel

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