

**SENATOR
ROBERT JACKSON**

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**THE SENATE
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March 23, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

My office has been responding to the devastating fire at 74 Post Avenue in Inwood since the night it occurred—January 5, 2021. My staff who were present that night heard from shaken residents that they were certain the fire was caused by electrical wiring problems the landlord knew about but had done nothing to fix. The fire marshal's report confirmed the tenants' intuition.

To add insult to injury, the landlord's negligence has persisted into the recovery phase. On January 26, three weeks after the fire, there was still no clear line of communication between the landlord and the tenants and the apartments were not secured. My office had to intercede to make sure that the landlord provided proper security to the building and that clean-up and re-entry protocols were communicated to tenants. We also had to verify with city agencies that some of the protocols—including allowing tenants re-entry to gather belongings in apartments with suspected asbestos contamination—were unsafe and had to cease.

In the following weeks, my office obtained legal counsel for the tenants because the landlord's negligence had already led to the needless ongoing separation of families from their children and unnecessary loss of sensitive documentation, personal keepsakes, and tens of thousands of dollars worth of goods. We are glad to be collaborating with Manhattan Legal Services in making sure the rights of the tenants of 74 Post Avenue are respected and that the landlord complies with his responsibility to provide dignified temporary housing. As such, I fully support the Housing Part action they have filed with the tenants.

My ongoing concern is that The Heights Real Estate Company is insisting that tenants accept permanent relocation because they have plans to try to combine as many apartments as possible during reconstruction to avoid rent regulation now that we have strengthened rent stabilization laws in Albany. If this is indeed their plan, it is reprehensible and morally bankrupt to steal these apartments out of rent stabilization during the worst economic crisis our city has seen in decades. I will do everything in my power to stop this from happening.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my Deputy Chief of Staff, Chris Nickell, at chris@senatorjackson.com.

In Unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Robert Jackson' with a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Jackson
Senator, 31st District