

HENRY BUTLER



DEMOCRAT FOR CITY COUNCIL 41ST DISTRICT

BROWNSVILLE ★ OCEAN HILL ★ BEDFORD-STUYVESANT
EAST FLATBUSH ★ CROWN HEIGHTS

LEADERSHIP YOU CAN BELIEVE IN

Affordable Housing Policy Plan

PAID FOR BY HENRY BUTLER 41ST COUNCIL

HENRY BUTLER'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY PLAN



INTRODUCTION

I was born and raised in Bedford-Stuyvesant and I am proud to still live in the community that I love. As a child of NYCHA, I have experienced firsthand the realities of housing in the 41st District, and if I am elected to the City Council, one of my top priorities will be making sure that our community is truly an affordable place to live. Today, 35% of our residents are rent burdened, and more than 30% of all family shelters in Brooklyn, are in our district. According to the NYC Comptroller, since 2000, New York City has lost over 400,000 apartments renting for \$1,000 a month or less. This is unacceptable, which is why I have put together a plan for affordable housing in the 41st. As the former Chair and current District Manager of Community Board 3, I understand the importance of community engagement during the zoning process and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). I will seek a greater input from the community as it relates to my authority over any project. As Councilmember, my main priority will be to deliver housing that is affordable for lifelong residents of the 41st district and reverse the tide of displacement.



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WORKING WITH NONPROFIT DEVELOPERS TO ENSURE TRULY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

It should be no surprise that when for-profit developers are hired to create housing, their interests don't prioritize the future tenants. Their interests prioritize, you guessed it – profit. When identifying developers for our community, I take the position that any new development in the 41st on city-owned land must be in partnership with a nonprofit, a Community Land Trust (CLT) or union workers to ensure a community-driven approach. There are 216 vacant lots in our district, largely in Brownsville, that are owned by the city and many of them could be occupied with affordable homes.



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When it comes to new construction up to 50 units, those developments must be in partnership with a nonprofit or a Community Land Trust (CLT). Unlike for-profit developers, non-profits are more mission driven, and willing to leave money on the table to help the development succeed and be affordable. Similarly, Community Land Trusts have shown to be effective in providing low-cost housing and are required to be permanently affordable. I will not allow the gentrification of our district to harm the people who have lived here all their lives, and Community Land Trusts are a protection against rising rents.

Last month, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) announced that \$1.65 million will be granted to create and expand Community Land Trusts (CLTs) in New York City through Enterprise's new Community Land Trusts Capacity Building Initiative. If elected to City Council, I will make sure that our district sees their fair share of that money to build badly-needed affordable housing.

For new buildings with over 50 units, I will advocate to developers my desire to see union workers on the project. I have supported union workers my entire life because they're made up of the working men and women of this district. When I think of well-built, quality homes, I think of union workers, and that quality of work is what our community deserves.

In addition, we also need developers that reflect the demographic makeup of our district and have our best interests at heart. That is why I will call on HPD to release a Minority and Women Business Enterprise exclusive RFP for projects within the 41st council district projects.

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YOU DESERVE COMFORTABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR INCOME IS

New construction must meet the needs of our residents at the low-income spectrum but also those who are above the poverty level, as well as the returning college professionals who want to start their career and family in the community they were raised. In order to ensure community affordability, all multi-family projects that seek my support must be a mixed income development, and these must be low, moderate, and middle-income developments.

This rental model would mean a third of the units would be low-income households earning up to 60% of Area Median Income (AMI), another two thirds would have rents affordable to moderate and middle income households earning up to 130% of AMI. This not only ensures that a range of people can get affordable housing, but creates an environment that brings people together and doesn't allow for income segregation.



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The main source of affordable housing in our district is through the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). In our community, there are 35 NYCHA developments that contain over 11,500 units. I am intimately familiar with NYCHA housing because I grew up in the Tompkins Houses, and my parents still live there to this day. While I believe that our public housing system plays a vital role in providing affordable housing, I am deeply concerned about the massive backlog of maintenance requests that are burdening our residents. Whether it's a small issue like a leaky faucet, or a serious health hazard like mold, our NYCHA residents deserve to have home repairs in a timely manner, and response time is taking way too long. To ensure our residents have a better quality of life, I will work with the NYCHA presidents to create a program, supported by discretionary funding, that will address the maintenance needs in our public housing. Right now, there are only a handful of maintenance workers that respond to every NYCHA unit in the city, and this has proven to be a failing system.

Another way I will make housing affordable for renters in our district, is to enact a landlord-tenant compromise. Whenever property taxes are increased in this city, our tenants are the ones that feel the burden because landlords raise rents to offset the money they owe in taxes. Due to the increase in real estate taxes and subsequent rent hikes, I am proposing a landlord-tenant compromise that would ensure stabilized rent for our community. I will put heavy pressure on the city to enact a property tax rollback, and in turn, the Rent Guidelines Board should vote for a rent rollback for rent-stabilized tenants. 35% of our residents are already tax burdened, and the people of District 41 shouldn't be kicked out of their homes just because taxes go up.

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FULFILLING THE DREAM OF OWNING A HOME

The City's housing plan has to include a greater invest in homeownership and rental should not be the full scope of our city's housing plan. According to a 2016 Furman Center study, 77% of New York's low-moderate-and middle income households comprised 22% of New York City's home buyers. This is why I support an initiative to expand the HPD's Home First Down Payment Assistance Program. In partnership with my colleagues in the Council, I will advocate for increasing the cap of the loan from \$15,000 to \$100,000 and increasing the program allocation from \$3 million to \$8 million. In turn, recipients who buy a 2-4 family home would be obligated to maintain affordable rental units as a condition of their loan. In addition, we must also review taxes for current homeowners.

As Councilmember, I will urge my governing partners in the Council and the Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development to serve low-income families. I am pledging to invest my discretionary capital budget to ensure low-income families in the 41st have an opportunity to own a piece of our community and the city should join me.



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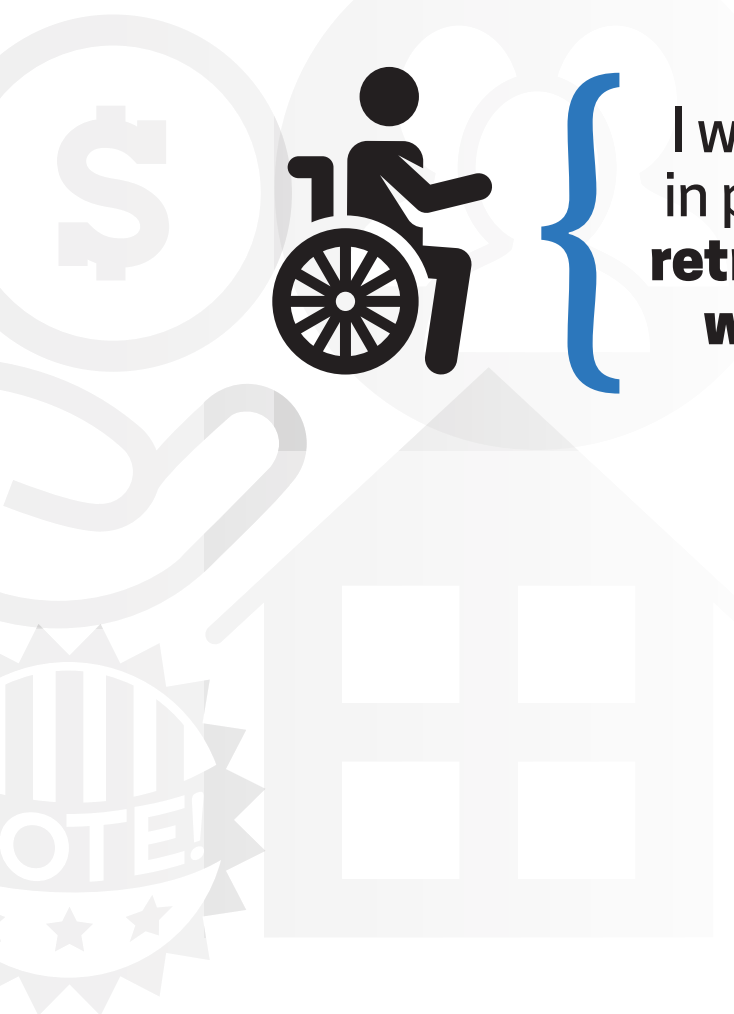
PROTECTING OUR SENIORS

By the year 2040, seniors will make up 20% of our population, and new construction cannot be our only tool to serve our current and future seniors. To preserve affordable housing for seniors, I will advocate for an aging in place program which will retrofit multi-family units so we all can age with dignity and security in our own homes. Without certain devices, such as handrails or grab bars in the shower, our elderly citizens are at risk of sustaining debilitating injuries.

If elected, I will also improve community outreach for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). These programs ensure that our seniors, many of whom are living on a fixed income, can afford to stay in their homes. I will make sure that there is reliable flow of information on these programs to our elderly community, and that our senior centers are playing a role in educating those who qualify. As it stands today, the seniors and disabled residents of our district have to either apply online by themselves, or travel to Manhattan to enroll in SCRIE or DRIE. I believe it is a discriminatory practice that the city does not provide more adequate registration support for people who need these programs. If elected to City Council, I will change this.



I will advocate for an aging in place program which will **retrofit multi-family units with mobility devices.**



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CONCLUSION



As you may know, the newly released Brownsville Plan promises 2,500 new affordable housing units to be built in our community. While this is a great start, there is still much more to be done in terms of new development, NYCHA, home ownership and senior living. I created this plan because it addresses the core issues happening in our district, and gives concrete ideas that will ensure that everyone in our community can afford a place to call home. Displacement has become a growing problem in the 41st District, and as a member of City Council, I will not stand by and let this continue to happen.



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