

Senate Majority Prioritize Code Enforcement Across New York State

(Albany, NY) The Senate Majority today advanced sweeping legislation improving safety by addressing code enforcement failures across the State. The legislation is the result of a [six month investigation](#) and [report](#) on code enforcement practices in New York spearheaded by Senator James Skoufis, Chair of the Senate Committee on Investigations & Government Operations, and Senator Brian Kavanaugh, Chair of the Senate Committee on Housing, Construction, and Community Development. The legislation passed today will prioritize the safety and well-being of New York residents and first responders, increase transparency for stakeholders and further empower all levels of government to address code violations.

“Code enforcement is essential to keeping roofs over our heads, walls from collapsing, and New Yorkers safe in their homes and businesses,” **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “I applaud Senator James Skoufis, Chair of the Senate Investigations & Government Operations Committee and Senator Brian Kavanaugh, Chair of the Senate Housing, Construction, & Community Development Committee for conducting an investigation into code enforcement issues and generating a report with proposals to help address these concerns. The legislation advanced by the Senate Majority will combat the alarming code enforcement shortfalls that were uncovered, and will help keep New Yorkers safe.”

The legislation that the Senate Majority passed was the result of a [six month investigation](#) into Code Enforcement in New York State. The investigation took a comprehensive look at the full lifecycle of the code enforcement process, as well as a close examination of four municipalities: City of Albany, City of Newburgh, City of Mount Vernon, and Town of Ramapo. The investigation team held a public hearing in the City of Newburgh, the first of its kind, to hear directly from key stakeholders from across the state. Additionally, they heard testimony from representatives from each municipality, first responders, the Department of State, landlords, and tenants. As outlined in the [report](#), the investigation found a systematic failure to prioritize code enforcements across New York State, creating an unsafe environment for residents and first responders, and concluded that code enforcement must be a top priority for all levels of government.

The legislation passed by the Senate Majority includes:

- **Prohibiting the Use of Plywood:** This bill, [S.1726A](#), sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, will prohibit the use of plywood, wood composite, wood veneer, or similar wood-based products to board up vacant abandoned properties.
- **State and County Investigations:** This bill, [S.7300](#), sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, will allow for county intervention on unenforced code violations and

allow the county to trigger a state investigation in order to trigger jurisdictional transfer from a municipality to a county in certain circumstances.

- **Municipal Authority:** This bill, [S.7301](#), sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, will provide additional lower court judicial authority to make it easier for municipalities to address violations of the building and fire prevention code.
- **Creation of Residential Rental Registry:** This bill, [S.7288A](#), sponsored by Senator Brian Kavanagh, will create a statewide residential rental registry to provide information relating to rental units including code violations.
- **Increases State Code Enforcement:** This bill, [S.7287](#), sponsored by Senator Jamaal Bailey, will increase the state code enforcement powers of the secretary of state by establishing a separate state code enforcement office headed by an ombudsperson.
- **Penalties for Dangerous Apartment Alterations:** This bill, [S.1714](#), sponsored by Senator John E. Brooks, creates penalties on building owners of up to \$7,500 for violations of the uniform fire prevention and building code that impedes egress during a fire or other emergency evacuation.
- **Building Code Penalties:** This bill, [S.4938](#), sponsored by Senator David Carlucci, will enhance pre-existing building code penalties for repeat offenders of State uniform fire prevention and building code.
- **Fire Extinguisher Requirements:** This bill, [S.2813A](#), sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie, will require fire extinguishers to be placed on each floor of all rental apartment buildings.
- **Time Restrictions for Court Issued Consent Orders:** This bill, [S.3320](#), sponsored by Senator Robert Jackson, will establish time restrictions for court issued consent orders for work performance to remove or remedy dangerous conditions or building code violations.
- **Fines for Code Violations:** This bill, [S.7292A](#), sponsored by Senator Rachel May, imposes escalating fines for code violations and illegal conversions.
- **Code Enforcement Training and Certification:** This bill, [S.7291](#), sponsored by Senator Roxanne Persaud, will increase the minimum standards for training and certification for code enforcement personnel.

Chair of the Senate Committee on Investigations & Government Operations and bill sponsor, Senator James Skoufis, said, “This package of legislation is the result of our comprehensive six-month investigation into code enforcement that identified a systemic failure to enforce code at all levels of government. This package of legislation will go a long way towards protecting New York tenants, property owners, and first responders, all of whom deserve a state with safe housing. I thank Senator Kavanagh and all of my colleagues for their collaboration on this important effort.”

Chair of the Senate Committee on Housing, Construction, and Community Development and bill sponsor, Senator Brian Kavanagh, said, “Enforcing housing, fire, and building codes is crucial to our efforts to ensure that every New Yorker has access to a safe place to live. By creating a statewide registry of all rental housing, enhancing local governments’ capacity to conduct inspections and enforce the law, and increasing penalties for egregious violations and repeat offenders, this legislation will

begin to address long-neglected problems. I thank Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator James Skoufis, and all my colleagues on the Housing and Investigations Committees for their partnership on this important work, everyone who provided testimony at our two public hearings, and the many New Yorkers in our communities and in local government who have fought long and hard for better housing conditions for all.”

Thanks,

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