

I also want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Warren Harding, and I chair the steering committee of Mitchell-Lama United (MLU), which is a coalition of three Mitchell-Lama advocacy groups, one of which is Cooperators United for Mitchell-Lama (CU4ML). My testimony is being made on behalf of MLU to further support the recommendations regarding dissolution and reconstitution of Mitchell-Lama co-ops given by the President of CU4ML, Adele Niederman.

The growing trend of housing unaffordability in New York City, particularly during the current COVID-19 pandemic, has prompted Mitchell-Lama United to develop legislation and policy recommendations to protect and preserve the affordability of Mitchell-Lama co-op developments.

MLU wholeheartedly supports and echoes the testimony of CU4ML.

The legislation we are introducing mirrors on the state level, the changes Adele Niederman, representing CU4ML, has recommended occur at the city level in the HPD Mitchell-Lama Rules which are the subject of this hearing.

1. Raise the vote needed for every step of the privatization and semi-privatization (“2 to 11”) process from 2/3 to 80%, the standard level adopted by HPD for creating affordable home ownership
2. Impose a moratorium on any steps toward privatization and semi-privatization during the pandemic, including prohibiting expending any funds on these activities
3. Require a special assessment to raise money to be spent on pursuing privatization
4. Rescind the HPD rule allowing cooperatives to dissolve as Mitchell-Lama co-ops and reconstitute as limited-profit HDFC cooperatives, otherwise known as 2 to 11 conversion

The vulnerabilities of the current economic climate require immediate action, and we feel that these recommendations best address our concerns regarding the threats to the Mitchell-Lama program. HPD’s support of these policies in its own ML Rules and on the state level in the legislature, will ensure the protection and preservation of New York City’s most affordable home ownership program.