



ACORN Canada

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Dear Councillors, Members of the Budget Committee, and Mayor John Tory

Thank you for the opportunity to address the budget committee today. My name is Marcia Stone, I'm a member of ACORN, the Co-Chair of the Weston chapter, and a resident of Ward 5.

ACORN is a group of low and moderate income people fighting for change. I'm here to talk about protecting and preserving affordable housing, a top issue for ACORN members across Toronto

A lot of ACORN members in Weston are paying their rent on time every month, but the landlords are ignoring basic repairs. We keep on organizing actions to pressure the city and the landlords to provide our community members with healthy homes. But this should not be our second, or third, or fourth job. Enforcing property standards is the responsibility of the city.

ACORN members were so excited when we won RentSafe in 2017, but at this point it's clear it lacks the resources it needs. Every property inspector is dealing with over 100 buildings. Tenants either don't know their rights, or don't trust the city to enforce them

So these are ACORN demands for the budget:

- Funding for the 'RentSafe' program, be increased so that 100 property standards enforcement officers are on staff by the end of 2022. The city recently looked at licensing rooming houses across the city. Under that proposal the city would have hired 28 property inspectors for roughly 350 rooming houses. Rentsafe has 28 property inspectors for roughly 3500 buildings. The ratio of bylaw officers to buildings must at least meet what the city proposed for rooming houses. It seems to us that the city is more interested in the rights of homeowners than the rights of tenants. You could increase RentSafe's resources by adding funding from general revenues, increasing the fees charged to landlords, and fining landlords for violations.
- We also need Funding for the 'Rent Grant' program, a non-repayable grant from the Toronto Rent Bank, be made permanent until the end of COVID.
- Revenue from the vacant homes tax be spent only on housing programs
- New revenue be brought in, by increasing fines for bad landlords

Housing is health, and your postal code should not determine the quality of your life. It's an election this year, tenants are watching and organizing

Thank you for your time,

Marcia Stone, Co-Chair Weston ACORN, Resident Ward 5