

# Residents Call for Just Cause Eviction Policy

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"Up with the wages, down with the rents!" rang the shouts of tenants and community activists as they marched into City Hall Plaza on Tuesday afternoon, April 7. Led by tenants who have been forced out of their homes by speculative developers, the march began on Hudson Street in Chinatown, where protesters called on First Suffolk LLC to halt its acquisition of historic brick row houses that threatens to displace low income immigrant families. Chinatown has experienced skyrocketing real estate values following the addition of nearly 3,000 luxury units in the past 15 years.

Pei Ying Yu, an elderly tenant displaced from her Hudson Street apartment, broke into tears as she described the ordeal of being forced from her home after the building was purchased by First Suffolk LLC. "All we want is to return to our home," said Yu.

Arriving at City Hall Plaza, speakers included tenants, foreclosed homeowners, and community leaders from Jamaica Plain, East Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, who called for new policy solutions to the displacement crisis. After speaking in front of City Hall, some 300 marchers moved indoors to pack a city council hearing on displacement, community stability and neighborhood preservation, sponsored by Boston city councilor Tito Jackson.

Darnell Johnson of Right to the City Boston noted more than 4,500 households experienced foreclosure in Boston over a six-year period and that most had joined the rental market. Sixty-seven percent of Bostonians today are renters.

"Low wages, corporate greed and for-profit development robs our neighborhood stability," said Johnson. "It's only fair to establish a policy to protect vulnerable residents against no-fault eviction, and at the same time support small property owners who are willing to keep apartments affordable."

Kadineyse Peña of the Boston Tenants Coalition called for increased developer payouts under the city's Inclusionary Development Program and for targeting resources to low and moderate income Bostonians most threatened with displacement.

"Rents keep going up, but wages have been stagnant," said Peña, citing a Brookings Institution study that placed Boston third in a ranking of major US cities with growing income inequality gaps. "Developers are making huge profits and need to pay their fair share." Others noted that a real estate transfer tax on luxury sales has brought more than \$100 million in new revenues to San Francisco.

Karen Chen, Co-Director of the Chinese Progressive Association, called for neighborhood stabilization zones around new transit nodes and in rapidly gentrifying areas like Chinatown or East Boston. "We need to have policies focused not only on new development but also long-term preservation of affordable housing before our people are pushed out of the city."

The Right to Remain Campaign is an emerging citywide coalition: Right to the City Boston, Right to the City VOTE, Boston Tenant Coalition, Alternatives for Community & Environment, Boston Workers Alliance, Chinese Progressive Association, City Life/Vida Urbana, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Fairmount Indigo Line CDC Collaborative, Greater Four Corners Action Coalition, Jamaica Plain Progressives, Neighbors United for a Better East Boston, New England United for Justice.

