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Fed-up Tenants File Lawsuit Against Indicted Landlord Steve Croman Demanding Safe Living Conditions

Tenants of 159 Stanton Street Hold Press Conference to Call out Croman for Unsafe Building Conditions and Alleged Tenant Harassment

New York, NY – Tenants from 159 Stanton Street will be joined by State Senator Daniel Squadron, a representative from Council Member Margaret Chin’s office, and members of the Stop Croman Coalition, the Stand for Tenant Safety (STS) Coalition, Stabilizing NYC, and the Urban Justice Center, together holding a press conference to call out Croman on his predatory equity practices and failure to maintain a secure building for his tenants.

The 159 Stanton Street Tenants Association has filed a housing court action against Croman for unsafe building conditions and alleged tenant harassment. Under Croman’s ownership, tenants at 159 Stanton Street have faced:

- Collapsing ceilings (some onto tenants)
- Rat infestations
- Dust and debris strewn halls
- Mold infestations
- Stairwell flooded from rainwater due to broken roof door
- Uncertainties about the building’s structural integrity
- Windows and doors being left wide open for weeks
- Units left half-finished, vacant, and unsecured for 6+ months
- Repeated robberies throughout building
- Vacant and unsecured unit used as bathroom by vagrants

Recently, a burglar broke in through a window left open in an apartment under construction. Tenants had complained to management about this serious gap in security. The burglar fell through the unfinished floor into the apartment below and robbed it.

These issues are not unique to just 159 Stanton Street. Croman owns approximately 185 buildings in NYC, with many rent stabilized tenants who allege harassment and unsafe building conditions often resulting from “construction as harassment.”

“Since Croman bought the building, the private investigator working for him, Anthony Falconite has visited multiple times. Tenants had repeated interactions with him that left them feeling harassed. Nearly half the apartments are vacant and were demolished more than a year ago - they are now sitting gutted, vacant, and unsecured - leaving tenants vulnerable to crime and vermin. During the demolition the building was upended by the reckless work being done; a light fixture fell from the ceiling of one unit and ceilings came crashing down in two others. Rain regularly comes in from the roof door, damaging the plaster enough so that parts of the public hall ceiling have come down. The front door latch is shoddy and there have been numerous intruders in the building, entering through the door or unlocked windows of vacant apartments. At least three tenants have been burgled. There is a feeling of unease and uncertainty about our homes, which are supposed to be sanctuaries,” said the **159 Stanton Street Tenants Association**.

“Every tenant has a right to safe, clean housing, and every landlord has a duty to provide it,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I stand with these tenants and the Cooper Square Committee in their demand that Steve Croman properly maintain this building, end the break-ins and harassment, and live up to his basic obligations as a landlord in this city.”

“Every tenant has the right to live free of harassment from their landlord, and in housing that is safe for themselves and their families,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. “The tenants of 159 Stanton deserve far better than the lost checks, water leaks, rats, and other deplorable conditions at this building. I stand with these tenants and their allies in the fight to protect and defend our precious affordable housing.”

“The pattern of tenant harassment reported by Croman’s tenants is unacceptable at 159 Stanton Street, unacceptable in our community, and unacceptable in our city,” said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. “I’m proud to have helped push forward the calls for justice for Croman’s tenants, and as today’s action and the recent joint action from the Attorney General and State show, tenant harassment has no place in New York. I thank the Cooper Square Committee, the Urban Justice Center, and the tenants of 159 Stanton Street.”

“The living conditions in this building are the result of neglect and Croman’s desire to displace rent-stabilized tenants, to renovate their apartments, and to bring in high-income renters. His predatory equity practices are not uncommon in the buildings he owns. At 159 Stanton Street in particular, the construction work being done has all the telltale traits of construction-as-harassment. It has compromised the tenants’ sense of security and caused both mental and physical torment. Something needs to be done because these tenants’ safety is at risk,” said **Cooper Square Committee organizer, Joanne Zhao**.

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About Stop Croman Coalition

The Stop Croman Coalition is a coalition of tenants living in an estimated 185 + residential buildings, owned and operated by Steven Croman, his wife Harriet Kahan Croman and 9300 Realty. Under constant threat of eviction, Croman tenants have all struggled against systematic assaults on their basic rights as citizens and human beings to live safely and peacefully in their homes.

About the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center

Community Development Project provides legal, participatory research and policy support to strengthen the work of grassroots and community-based groups in New York City to dismantle racial, economic and social oppression.

About the Cooper Square Committee

The Cooper Square Committee (CSC) works with area residents to contribute to the preservation and development of affordable, environmentally healthy housing and community/cultural spaces so that the Cooper Square area remains racially, economically, and culturally diverse. The CSC has spearheaded significant neighborhood victories in its history, comprising over 50 years of tenant organizing, community-based planning, advocacy and development. They rely on the active involvement of their members in the organization's work to advance their affordable housing agenda.

About Stand for Tenant Safety

Stand for Tenant Safety (STS) is a citywide coalition of community organizations who are fighting to protect the lives and homes of New York City tenants where landlords are using construction as harassment. Through this community driven effort, they demand the systemic reform of the Department of Buildings.

About Stabilizing NYC Coalition

Stabilizing NYC is a coalition comprised of fifteen grassroots neighborhood-based organizations, a citywide legal service provider and a citywide housing advocacy organization who have come together to combat tenant harassment and preserve affordable housing for the New Yorkers who need it most. This project combines legal, advocacy and organizing resources into a citywide network to help tenants take their predatory equity landlords to task for patchwork repairs, bogus eviction cases, and affirmative harassment.