

Testimony of Alicia Cruz for December 8th Democratic Policy Committee Hearing

My Name is Alicia Cruz, I am a single mom of 4 girls. I am the sole provider for my four girls and we have lived in our apartment for 3 years now. I live in Lancaster City in a building made in the early 1900s. I've had two landlords since moving here.

I moved into this apartment in November 2018. I remember seeing it for the first time and the kitchen sink was clogged with dirty stagnant water. Then shortly after moving in I learned the bathtub was also clogged which has turned out to be a problem the entire time I've lived here.

There are holes in the cabinets a small space between were they attach on the walls that lead to spaces for rodents to constantly run in and out of my house, eating my children's food. Due to plumbing issues and mold growing there are wet dark dirty places in the bathroom and kitchen that roaches breed. I ended up getting a cat to deter mice, which helped I know because before I got him, I would sweep up mouse feces daily.

As I write this, I'm freezing at home due to the electric baseboards not working well. I rent a two bedroom and the entire time I've been here I could not use the second bedroom properly.

The new owner bought the property about two years ago and I have asked time and time again for repairs to be made to my home to no avail. Other tenants have told me, as well, that they have issues in their apartments as well like mine, cracks in ceilings water damage in the walls, mold in the apartments. I am constantly sweeping up dust, that is coming more from the walls than my own children. He has purchased other properties on this block and repairs them. But wants to throw me out before repairing my home.

I've tried time and time again to leave this apartment but do not qualify to rent anywhere else at the time. I chose to stay for now and fight because my girls deserve to have a roof over their heads. Even if they aren't able to take a decent bath because the bathtub is gross due to not draining properly. So they have to stand on a stool or I sponge bath them.

I know that god will make the way for my girls and I to have a better home some day and I am going to keep fighting on making that happen. For now, I am thankful for the opportunity to shed light on a problem that so many renters—who work hard and fall between the cracks for help—are going through.