**Testimony prepared by Kim Moscaritolo**

**For the New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings**

**Date: January 20, 2015**

**Re: Oversight Hearing on Short Term Rentals**

I would like to thank Chairman Williams and the members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings for the opportunity to present this testimony regarding short-term rentals in New York City.

As a New York City resident for 12 years, I have seen first hand how rents have skyrocketed over the past decade. Each year more and more apartments become deregulated and people are forced to leave this great city because they cannot afford to live here anymore.

While it may, on the surface, seem reasonable that tenants would want to ease the financial burden by renting out spare bedrooms in their apartments, the reality is that companies like Airbnb and other short-term rentals only serve to exacerbate the existing problems in the NYC housing market. Further, they put other tenants at risk, and fracture existing communities.

You will no doubt receive much testimony that deals with facts and numbers, but I would just like to share my perspective as an average tenant. When I signed the lease for my current apartment, I first had to submit to a background check, and provide a letter from my previous landlord stating that I was a good tenant. I assume that all other tenants in my building went through the same process, hopefully ensuring that I am sharing a building with responsible people who have a vested interest in the upkeep and security of the building.

If another tenant, however, chooses to rent out their apartment on Airbnb, then there is no guarantee that this person, with a key to my building, has gone through any type of background check. And because the building is residential, it is not equipped with the type of security precautions that a hotel might have, such as security cameras. It scares me that there could be strangers in my building, who have no regard for its cleanliness or its security.

I have absolutely no problem with a person renting out a room in their apartment to make extra money while they are also living in the apartment. But it has become quite clear that the vast majority of listings on Airbnb are not sweet old ladies renting out a spare room to make a little extra cash. They are people who are using the service as a way to get around existing rent laws to make more money.

I urge the City Council to do all it can to crack down on illegal, short-term rentals. We must continue to protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords and companies that exploit our rent laws for their own financial gain.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present testimony on this important issue.

Kim Moscaritolo

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