



Media Advisory
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Small Business Jobs Survival Act Gains Momentum with Backing from 21 New York City Council Members

The SBJSA would grant New York small business fair and equal representation during commercial lease renewals, enabling them to remain open, thereby sustaining the unique attributes of each neighborhood residents and visitors love; Business owners organizing through TakeBackNYC have so far persuaded 21 council members to co-sponsor the bill, making their way steadily to the 26 needed for passage

New York, NY -- July 17th, 2015 --TakeBackNYC, a grassroots movement organized to pass the [Small Business Jobs Survival Act](#) (SBJSA), which would restore economic equality to business owners and give them fair rights during lease negotiations, today announced significant momentum, marked by Council Member support and increased action from New York City business owners. When passed, the SBJSA would outline an arbitration process which gives both parties equal opportunity to present their arguments for their reasonable terms of the lease. In order for the bill to have airtime in the New York City Council and pressure Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito to call for a Public Hearing, it needs 26 council members' support - as of today, it has the support of 21.

Every New York City borough has its own unique attributes, but as small businesses succumb to outrageous lease hikes and close their doors, neighborhoods' individual personalities are fading, and business owners are unable to earn a living. There has been a shift in the New York City economy, whereby real estate speculation in tandem with an increasing number of commercial landlords are imposing astronomical lease terms when leases expire – oftentimes more than doubling rent for businesses that have been in place for decades. The new rates and terms are not within realistic means and therefore not sustainable for individual business owners, forcing them to close. “My bookstore has been in the West Village for over 24 years, and although I have several years left on my lease, I am certain that unless the SBJSA is passed, I too, will have to close the shop,” says Jim Drougas, owner of Unoppressive Non-Imperialist Bargain Books, a neighborhood favorite that has been featured in many articles as well as last years' independent film *Obvious Child*. “Real Estate has become a commodity, the players seem impervious as to which types of businesses the neighborhood residents want to frequent and space is either rented to chain stores that shutter after six months, or sit vacant for years. This is a lose-lose situation for all involved, something has to change.”

Small businesses began the fight against unreasonable rent increases in 1986 when in the SBJSA was originally introduced. Political maneuvering and closed door deals made on behalf of the Real Estate lobby have consistently kept this important bill from the public discourse. Since that time the SBJSA has been fighting for visibility, and even given overwhelming support of NYC's small business community has never made it to the Council floor for a vote. This won't happen again, times have changed.

“TakeBackNYC firmly believes that now is the right time for the SBJSA to thrive,” says Steve Null, founder of the Coalition for Fair Business Rents and longtime supporter of the bill. “We're seeing the power of our united voices as New York City Council Members hear the thousands of small

businesses asking for change. The SBJSA has more leverage now than ever before and for the first time in nearly 30 years, is close to getting the support it needs from New York City Council members to finally pass.”

In an effort to gain the last bit of support it needs, and take advantage of strength in numbers, TakeBackNYC is organizing, updating and disseminating all information through [Townsquared](#), a free private social network exclusively for local business owners. To facilitate optimal and expedited action, Townsquared members have created a special discussion channel just for TakeBackNYC. Additionally, on July 22, Townsquared is sponsoring an upcoming public forum in Washington Heights to discuss ways in which to achieve full council member support. For more details on the event and location click [here](#).

“Our mission at Townsquared is to be a safe place for businesses to come together, help one another to achieve common goals – TakeBackNYC embodies this,” says Rohit Prakash, CEO and co-founder of Townsquared. “We are proud to provide a platform with geo-location features that enable business owners nearby to interact, when in most cases they wouldn’t have the time or opportunity. It is our hope that this fuels initiatives that are important to our members and strengthens both their viability and the local economy.”

How can business owners be heard and get involved with TakeBackNYC to help restore economic equality?

- Visit [TakeBackNYC](#) for background on the SBJSA and the movement.
- Go to [Townsquared](#) to become a member and have all the latest news and resources on TakeBackNYC and its movement to pass the SBJSA, plus connect with your neighboring business owners to share advice, resources and work together.
- Click [here](#) to sign the petition in support of the SBJSA and illustrate to your borough’s representative that this is important.
- For quick reference here is the [full list](#) of New York City council members, their district as well as their stance on the SBJSA
- Use [this letter template](#), to send a letter to your neighborhood’s council member and encourage them to support the SBJSA.

For more information or to get involved with TakeBackNYC, please reach out to Kirsten Theodos at kirsten@takebacknyc.nyc.

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The Power of Small Business:

- While the small business sector has thrived in many cities, NYC has failed to deliver a sustainable economic climate for the small business community; Between 1000-1200 NYC small businesses are forced to close their doors every month anywhere from 8000-10000 jobs are being lost every month.
- The 28 million small businesses in America account for 54% of all U.S. sales.
- Small businesses provide 55% of all jobs and 66% of all net new jobs since the 1970s.
- The small business sector in America occupies 30-50% of all commercial space, an estimated 20-34 billion square feet.