



Media Advisory
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Contact: Kirsten Theodos
TakeBackNYC
kirsten@takebacknyc.nyc



Immigrant Community Demands City Hall pass the SBJSA: Says NO to Real Estate Speculation, Says NO to the extortion, Says NO to rent gouging forcing immigrant small businesses to close, Says NO to the Real Estate Lobby's Landlord Bill

Dateline, July 24, 2015, NY, NY: On the heels of last week's announcement that 23 out of the required 26 councilmembers have agreed to co-sponsor the Small Business Jobs Survival Act ([SBJSA](#)), 250 small business owners, residents, and community leaders of Dominican immigrant community descended upon the Malcolm X Center in Washington Heights this week to demand a real solution to the small business crisis and to stop the extortion and evictions of Latino-owned businesses.

Joining TakeBackNYC and a panel of community leaders, legal scholars, and activists, the community demanded a real solution and demanded the passage of the SBJSA which gives immigrant small business owners the rights and protections they need to stay in business and continue to provide the jobs and the economic mobility their community needs.

Event organizers, TakeBackNYC, the direct political action coalition fighting for the passage of the SBJSA (www.TakeBackNYC.nyc), and business owners in New York City are

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organizing and effecting change through Townsquared, a free private online network just for small business owners (www.townsqd.com).

“We work smarter when we work together,” said Townsquared Founder, Rohit Prakash. “Local business owners are busy running their businesses and are oftentimes intimidated or hesitant to take a position on a political initiative, as it feels like a lot of work. What’s great about a social network like Townsquared that was designed specifically for business owners to connect privately, is how it simplifies information and knowledge sharing. As the designated communication channel for the TakeBackNYC movement, Townsquared makes it easy for business owners to quickly reach out to one another, introduce the bill and solicit their business neighbors support and find the resources for communicating with their council members and participate in events. This type of unified communication was the missing element in previous attempts to pass the SBJSA.”

These sentiments were echoed throughout the forum where calls were made to City Hall to begin respecting the contributions to our economy and the character of our communities that immigrant small business owners represent. They called upon City Hall to take real action on this issue and pass the SBJSA. With 23 sponsors of the bill, just 3 shy of a passing vote, it looks like the more pro-immigrant and independent true progressive members of the City Council are taking these demands for action to heart and standing by their communities.

During the Q&A session and closing statements, Committee on Immigration Council Members who are actively fighting for immigrant rights, Daniel Dromm, Dr. Mathieu Eugene, and Rafael L. Espinal, were recognized for their leadership and solidarity. On the other hand, Chairman of the Committee on Immigration, Carlos Menchaca, and fellow Committee Member, Peter Koo, were called out as abandoning their responsibilities at a time when the immigrant community is in crisis and being disappointments for their non-sponsorship of the SBJSA which would give rights to small business owners, thereby ending this crisis. “It’s simple, if they won’t support us, we won’t support them,” remarked Silvia Smith, longtime community activist, small business owner, and founder of the Washington Heights Multicultural Center.