

Searchlight: Council passes bill to increase fines for illegal hotels [VIDEO] [UPDATED]

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The City Council is taking up the fight against illegal hotels with legislation that would set fines at \$1,000 to \$25,000.

At a news conference organized to announce yesterday's Council vote on the bill, Speaker Christine Quinn spoke about how resident Charles Seelig, 64, was having to deal with rude transients staying at his brownstone in the Village.

Seelig later told the Gazette that the building had people coming in and out all hours of the night. "It was really strange," he said. "It gave you a lot of insecurity."

The primary sponsor of the bill, Councilwoman Gale Brewer (D-Manhattan), says the bill will help to end illegal hotel use in the city that displaces permanent residents, reduces affordable housing stock and can be a nuisance for neighbors.

Tourists have also been victims of scams where they book an illegal hotel room and arrive only to find that no hotel exists at the address they were given, councilmember say.

[UPDATE: The bill passed at yesterday's stated meeting, 38-5.]

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