

REBNY rallies members to fight proposed cap on rental broker fees

Group sent out petition, request for broker stories

By [Kathryn Brenzel](#) | March 01, 2019 02:30PM

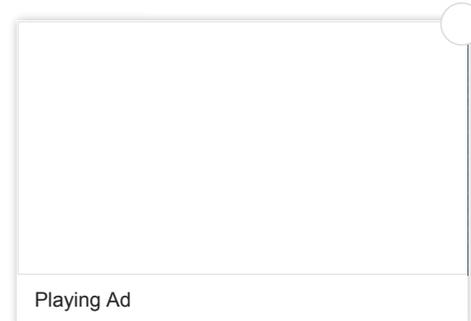


John Bank and Keith Powers (Credit: Larry Ford, YouTube, and iStock)

The Real Estate Board of New York is urging its members to sign a petition against a proposed bill that would dramatically slash rental broker fees.

An email blasted out by the co-chairs of REBNY's Residential Board of New York asks its members to help "fight Intro. 1423, the proposed legislation that would put residential agents out of business." The message refers to a bill put forward by Manhattan Council member Keith Powers, which seeks to cap broker fees at one month's rent. That would mean, in some cases, brokers going from a 15 percent cut of annual rent for their services to roughly 8.3 percent.

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The email, sent out by co-chairs, Stribling President Elizabeth Ann Stribling-Kivlan and Tungsten Partners founder Michael Bisordi, asks members to contact the bills' sponsors and their local council member and to send stories of how they've guided renters through the process of finding an apartment.

Ellen Cohen, an agent with Stribling, said the bill doesn't recognize the amount of leg work and research that goes into being a residential broker in New York.

"As an outsider, it's very easy to judge what brokers do," she said. "It's a little bit frustrating when other people are trying to decide what we are worth."

She added that commissions are often shared with other brokers and with the brokers' firm.

"I need every penny I make," she said. "I'm out there hustling every day."

The bill is part of larger package of legislation that seeks to cut down on initial payments required of renters. A separate measure would limit security deposits to one month's rent, while another would allow tenants to pay it in six monthly installments. Powers told *TRD* [last month](#) that broker fees as they stand are a financial strain and a hefty upfront cost for New Yorkers.

"There are a significant number of apartments that you have to commit to paying a fee before even seeing an apartment," he said. He added, however, that he is sensitive to concerns about the reduction of income for brokers and will engage in conversations on "how to best move forward."

The broker fee bill, which was introduced earlier this month, already has 25 sponsors.

Tags: [REBNY](#), [Residential Real Estate](#)

