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October 7, 2025

Congressman Jerry Nadler
201 Varick Street, Suite 669
New York, NY 10014

Dear Congressman Nadler:

In your October 4th op-ed in *AMNY*, you cited the collapse of “part of a NYCHA building” as proof “that New York City’s public housing is quite literally falling apart.” You stated that what happened “was not an isolated incident,” but “the predictable result following decades of neglect and disinvestment.”

That’s untrue. Anyone who clicked the link in your first sentence was directed to an October 1st *AMNY* piece with a headline attributing the collapse to an “apparent boiler blast.” An October 2nd piece in *The City* raised the possibility of human error related to boiler operation and quoted a NYCHA official as saying: “The collapse at Mitchel Houses was a very unfortunate, isolated incident.” The same article noted that “a floor-by-floor assessment of the building, including F and G lines adjacent to the collapsed chimney, the roof tanks and the basement, have not identified any indication that the building’s structural integrity was compromised by the blast”—evidence that the greater building was literally blast proof and the furthest thing from “quite literally falling apart.”

We are deeply disturbed that you seized on the incident to make a false claim supporting your position in the editorial. This is not nitpicking. It’s an alarming revelation of dishonesty on your part. You certainly know better than to claim that NYCHA’s buildings have decayed to the point of collapse. NYCHA itself vouches for the structural integrity of the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea (FEC) buildings. We and other members of the community along with Community Board 4 have repeatedly called your attention to the foundational lie upon which NYCHA’s Chelsea plan

stands—that the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea Houses buildings are so deteriorated that it would cost as much to renovate as to replace them.

Even NYCHA now admits this was untrue, and that its numbers did not take into account the cost of demolition or the design and approval of replacement buildings—a cost difference it estimates at upwards of a billion dollars. What does it say about a plan that it can only be justified to the public by lies? NYCHA has manipulatively told the FEC residents that rebuilding is their only path to decent homes, even as it fails to apply hundreds of millions in available city funds to improve the existing buildings. The agency has never provided a shred of evidence that FEC can't be renovated under the PACT-RAD program as originally planned, something it says might take as little as two years.

NYCHA is clearly pursuing its own plan to clear most of the FEC sites for new development that will fill its citywide coffers, contrary to its earlier assurances. The residents will be shamefully segregated onto a small part of their current campuses so the rest can be handed over for homes for the rich. The plan resembles nothing so much as the creation of the world's first ghetto, in Venice, where Jews were packed into a walled precinct. Do you really want your legacy to include support for a plan to ghettoize the FEC residents, one that will forever carry the stigma of racism?

Your refusal to meet in person with members of the public about NYCHA's plan or attend Community Board 4's town hall on it tells us you know the plan is indefensible. Your failure to argue face-to-face for it and listen to your constituents is a cowardly failure of leadership.

Your op-ed says: "We cannot allow outside pressure and fear to derail a project vital to Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea residents who deserve modern new apartments." What "outside pressure" do you mean? Justified concerns of FEC neighbors—your own constituents—who will be greatly impacted? And what of the FEC residents themselves? There is overwhelming evidence that the majority oppose demolition, an inconvenient truth for your position that you should have the courage to admit. With our other elected officials, you arrogantly place yourself in the position of telling the residents what's best for them instead of listening to them.

During the first Trump administration, we took heart in knowing that our local elected officials were honorable men. Under the new Trump administration, we are

in the darkest days we have ever known. We in Chelsea see both our national democracy and neighborhood character threatened, and we no longer have the consolation of accountable local representatives. You are helping autocratically impose a transformation of our neighborhood and expecting us to believe lies—hardly relief from Trump.

We need the Jerry Nadler we knew and loved. It's time to trade self-serving op-eds for meetings with those you were elected to serve. We'd gladly welcome you back for a conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Wolff', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Pamela Wolff, President

Cc: City Council Member Erik Bottcher
Assembly Member Tony Simone
Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal
Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
City Council Member Chris Banks, Committee on Public Housing
Attorney General Letitia James
Housing Protection Unit Chief Brent Meltzer, Attorney General's Office