

**JESSICA S. LAPPIN**

COUNCIL MEMBER • 5<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
330 EAST 63<sup>RD</sup> STREET, SUITE 1K  
NEW YORK, NY 10065  
(212) 980-1808  
FAX (212) 980-1828

[lappin@council.nyc.gov](mailto:lappin@council.nyc.gov)



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CHAIR - COMMITTEE ON

AGING

COMMITTEES

LAND USE  
EDUCATION  
TRANSPORTATION  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
ZONING & FRANCHISES SUBCOMMITTEE

July 31, 2012

Hon. Robert Tierney  
Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney:

I am writing in support of landmarking 186 Spring Street, a building that is very important in the history of the LGBT movement and AIDS activism in our city. As the former Chair of the City Council's Subcommittee on Landmarks, I know how important it is to act quickly to save important structures like this one. Working together in our respective roles we had many successes and it was very gratifying to come together and work towards the goal of preserving the historical fabric of our city. I am hopeful that we can be successful with 186 Spring Street.

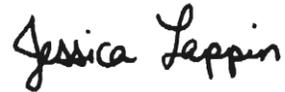
This 1825 row house at various times was the home of the founders of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, the Gay Activists Alliance, and Gay and Lesbian Independent Democrats. All of these organizations have had a major impact in moving our city and country forward on the issue of gay rights. One of the residents, Jim Owles, was New York City's first openly-gay candidate for public office, and lobbied for New York's very first gay and lesbian anti-discrimination ordinances in the early 1970s. Another resident, Bruce Voeller, co-founded and was the first director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and it was his research that determined that condoms prevent the spread of AIDS. He also coined the term "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome," that replaced the derogatory and inaccurate "Gay Related Immune Defense Disorder (GRID). Mr. Voeller was also the subject of a landmark case before the United States Supreme Court establishing the rights of lesbians and gay men to visit and have access to their children at a time when they were still considered by many to be mentally ill and a danger to children.

The house was used as a "gay commune" in the early 1970s. The people who lived or gathered there made history, improving the lives of lesbians and gay men in New York City and our country and the legacy of their work continues to have a profound impact upon our culture today. The Gay and Lesbian Independent Democrats perhaps said it best: "Greenwich Village is the place where the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

(LGBT) community started, but the historic house at 186 Spring Street with its many famous residents may be the exact location of our movements' birthplace."

For both its cultural and historical significance, I ask the Commission to protect 186 Spring Street right away and to move ahead with designation of the proposed South Village Historic District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Lappin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jessica Lappin**  
Council Member  
5<sup>th</sup> District – Manhattan

Cc: The Honorable Christine C. Quinn, Speaker, New York City Council  
Scott B. Melvin, President, Gay and Lesbian Independent Democrats  
Andrew Berman, Executive Director, Greenwich Village Society for  
Historic Preservation