

Where MetroDeeds and the NYC Public Advocate Agree (and Where They Don't) on the City's Worst Landlords

79 of 100 operators on MetroDeeds' top-100 distress ranking are also on the NYC Public Advocate's Worst Landlord Watchlist. 23 are on the PA list but not MetroDeeds' top-100. 21 are on MetroDeeds' top-100 but not the PA list — these are the citation-worthy disagreements.

By MetroDeeds Research Team · Published May 9, 2026

Of the 100 operators currently ranked highest by MetroDeeds' distress score, **79 are also on the NYC Public Advocate's annual Worst Landlord Watchlist** — a 79% overlap. The disagreement is the citation-worthy finding: **23 operators carry the Public Advocate flag but fall outside MetroDeeds' top-100**, and **21 operators sit in MetroDeeds' top-100 but are not on the Public Advocate list**. This report walks both directions of the disagreement.

Source: NYC Public Advocate Worst Landlord Watchlist (current PA flag in operator_portfolio_cache, 102 named operators) joined to MetroDeeds Landlord Ripoff Watch top-100 by distress score (2026-05-09 nightly compute).

What's being compared

The NYC Public Advocate publishes an annual Worst Landlord Watchlist of approximately 100 named operators selected through the office's own criteria. MetroDeeds publishes the Landlord Ripoff Watch — a continuously-updated leaderboard that tracks every for-profit residential operator on the public ranking (approximately 1,900 today, recomputed nightly) and assigns each one a 0–100 distress score. The Public Advocate flag is one of eight inputs into the MetroDeeds score (10% weight). The two systems are correlated by design but use different formulas, different update cadences, and different inclusion thresholds — and that produces both overlap and disagreement.

The 79% overlap

Of the 102 operators currently carrying the Public Advocate Worst Landlord flag in our cache, 79 also rank in MetroDeeds' top-100 by distress score. The overlap is a strong signal that the two methodologies converge on the most-clearly-distressed operators in NYC — the operators where unit-normalized HPD violation density, marshal eviction rate, and tenant-complaint volume all align with the Public Advocate's qualitative-plus-quantitative selection. [Rick Gropper](#), [Margaret Brunn](#), [Peter Fine](#), [David Tennenbaum](#), and [Joe Zitolo](#) top both lists.

21 operators on MetroDeeds' top-100 but not on the Public Advocate's list

These are operators MetroDeeds ranks among NYC's worst-100 by distress score who do not appear on the most recent Public Advocate Watchlist — operators where the algorithmic score sees severe distress but the Public Advocate's selection process did not place them. Notable examples (each linked to their full operator profile):

- [Moshe Piller](#) — 60 properties, **76,332 open HPD violations**, distress score 98. The largest absolute open-violation count among the 21.
- [Ved Parkash](#) — 73 properties, 67,155 open violations, score 98.
- [Rick Herman](#) — 105 properties, 47,761 open violations, score 98.
- [Josh Hubi](#) — 64 properties, 33,752 open violations, score 98.
- [Ezriel Weinberger](#) — 60 properties, 33,663 open violations, score 98.
- [Steve Finkelstein](#) — 72 properties, 32,893 open violations, score 98.
- [Sefik Gunes](#) — 67 properties, 28,342 open violations, score 98.
- [Mike Niamonitakis](#) — 93 properties, 24,792 open violations, score 98.
- [Mark Engel](#) — 89 properties, 24,266 open violations, score 98.
- [Craig Livingston](#) — 54 properties, 21,068 open violations, score 98.

These operators all carry violation counts at or above the levels seen on the Public Advocate's list itself. The most likely explanation is the difference in selection cadence: the Public Advocate publishes annually, while the MetroDeeds score recomputes nightly. Operators whose distress profile worsened between Public Advocate publication windows can rise on the MetroDeeds ranking before the next annual list refresh catches up.

23 operators on the Public Advocate's list but not in MetroDeeds' top-100

The reverse direction is equally instructive. These are operators the Public Advocate flagged this cycle whose MetroDeeds distress score does not place them in the algorithmic top-100. Distress scores in this group cluster between **70 and 88** — the "worst-tier" band on the leaderboard but below the cap.

- [Javier Martinez](#) — 13 properties, 1,299 open violations, score 88.
- [Deodat Lowtan](#) — 45 properties, 5,479 open violations, score 87.
- [Aryeh Assouline](#) — 15 properties, 1,690 open violations, score 82.
- [Neer Sachar](#) — 20 properties, 1,174 open violations, score 81.
- [Mendel Gold](#) — 20 properties, 1,857 open violations, score 78.

The Public Advocate's selection criteria weight tenant complaints and qualitative factors that the MetroDeeds score does not fully capture. Operators in this group typically have lower per-unit violation density than the score-98+ tier but high enough tenant-complaint volume or court-case activity for the Public Advocate's office to flag them. Both views are correct — they're answering

different questions. The MetroDeeds score asks "which operator's portfolio shows the worst measured outcomes per unit?" The Public Advocate list asks "which named landlords have the worst aggregate tenant relationships?" These align in 79 cases and diverge in 44.

What it means

The overlap is a sanity check on both methodologies. The disagreement, in both directions, is where each list adds something the other doesn't. Operators in MetroDeeds' top-100 but not on the Public Advocate's list represent algorithmic warning signals the city's annual review may not yet have surfaced. Operators on the Public Advocate's list but in MetroDeeds' moderate-distress band represent qualitative tenant-relationship evidence the algorithmic score weighs less heavily. A reader who cares about NYC housing accountability should consult both — they're not redundant.

SOURCES

- [NYC Public Advocate Worst Landlord Watchlist](#)
- [MetroDeeds LRW methodology — formula and weights](#)
- [NYC HPD Housing Maintenance Code Violations \(Open Data\)](#)

For informational purposes only. Not investment, legal, or transactional advice. Data sourced from public records and MetroDeeds-proprietary pipelines. © 2026 MetroDeeds Research / OZ Solutions Group. metrodeeds.com/research