

Dear Reps. McGee and Smith, Sens. Lopes and Anwar, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Olivia C. I am a resident of Hartford, and I am testifying in support of Connecticut H.B. 6531 - An Act Concerning the Right to Counsel in Eviction Proceedings and H.B. 6528 - An Act Concerning the Sealing of Eviction Records.

In September of 2020, I was notified of an eviction from my apartment. I'd had trouble paying rent due to a decrease in my work hours and my partner losing his job. I was scared and worried about what would happen to my family. I was not aware there were programs to help families in need like mine until February of 2021. I was put in touch with an attorney who was able to assist me so that I would not be put out with my two young children immediately. In February, a court date was held in which it was decided my family would have 30 days to leave our home. I was concerned with an eviction being on my record and making it harder to find a new place to live, and possibly having to rely on others for security. While dealing with this, I have had to send my children to their grandparents' house to help with school and work. I also did not want them to see me in the emotional state I was in and have it affect them as well.

With the help I received from my attorney, I now have a bit of time to find a new home and not be afraid of someone knocking on my door to put us out and have nowhere to go. I truly believe that everyone should have access to this kind of assistance if they are going through something similar. I wasn't aware of many of the rights I have as a tenant before and would hate for anyone else to be in the same situation and not have anywhere to turn.