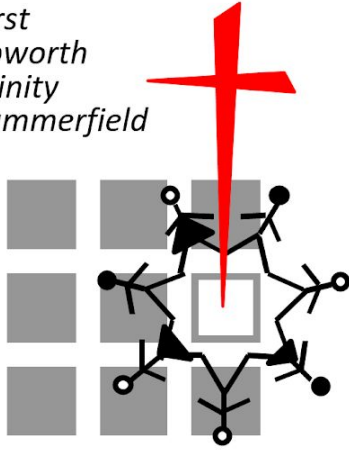


1789 First
1927 Epworth
1929 Trinity
1981 Summerfield



First & Summerfield United Methodist Church

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Vicki.flippin@gmail.com (Pastor)
www.fsumc.org (Website)

Rev. Vicki Flippin

March 4, 2021

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

My name is Rev. Vicki Flippin. I am the pastor of First & Summerfield United Methodist Church in New Haven and a resident of Milford, 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.

As a faith leader and a follower of Jesus Christ, I am driven by the ethics of Matthew 25:31-46 in which Jesus explicitly tells us that what matters in life is how we treat those who are suffering and who are vulnerable. In fact, our relationship to the divine is actually synonymous with our relationship with those who are suffering and vulnerable. When our neighbors are facing eviction, they are at their most vulnerable. There are many factors in one's life, a multitude of hardships that would lead one to the edge of eviction. And I'm sure you can see that these are the very same hardships that would make it incredibly difficult to secure good legal counsel during a time of crisis.

When we stand before God, I pray that we will be able to say that we did everything we could to make sure that those in our communities who were in crisis had all of the support they needed to get out of that crisis. I pray that we will be able to say that we did not stand by a system in which those in crisis walked into courtrooms defenseless against their landlords who had the resources and ability to secure legal representation, a system in which so many have been made homeless in a dehumanizing eviction process simply because they did not have legal advice. This is a sinful system, and we must change it. I strongly support H.B. 6531 and H.B. 6528 and urge you to favorably vote these bills out of the Housing Committee.

Sincerely,

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

Rev. Vicki Flippin
Pastor of First & Summerfield United Methodist Church in New Haven, CT
Resident of Milford, CT