

Hello,

My name is Cecelia Mairead McElroy, I'm a resident of Fairfield CT and I am here to voice support for the Right to Counsel bill. As a volunteer with Bridgeport Mutual Aid I work directly with Bridgeport residents, many of whom are renters that are facing food insecurity. Additionally, these residents are currently high risk for contracting Covid-19. I know this to be true because I'm January I received a text from a food recipient asking if I had any resources to help with rent relief. The person explained further that they, their partner, and three out of four of their children had contracted COVID-19 and therefore had not been working and could not pay rent for the month. They were going to be evicted by the end of the week. I firmly believe adequate and affordable housing is a human right, but it is even more crucial in the middle of winter, and the middle of a global pandemic. No family should have to worry about homelessness ever, and this bill will not fix the root problems of lack of affordable housing for everyone, but it will give people like these Bridgeport residents more rights to explore while those bigger issues are being fixed. This bill is not asking to change the system, it is asking to guarantee more rights so poor people have more rights to work with within this system. There is no reason to oppose this bill unless you oppose giving people more protections they already should have. This bill is a good first step, and I hope you all choose to take it.