

Testimony  
In **SUPPORT** of  
**HB 6531 – An Act Concerning The Right to Counsel in Eviction Proceedings**  
&  
**HB 6528 - An Act Concerning The Sealing of Eviction Records**

Dear Distinguished Members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Dr. Shannon O'Malley. I am an Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at Yale School of Medicine. As a pediatrician, I work at both Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital and Lawrence + Memorial Hospital where I specialize in taking care of children who need to be hospitalized. This testimony reflects my own personal opinion and does not reflect the opinion of Yale or Lawrence + Memorial Hospital. As a resident of Connecticut and as a child health advocate and expert, I strongly SUPPORT HB-6531 and HB-6528.

I am in strong support of these bills for multiple reasons, but my primary reason overall is that reducing housing insecurity will improve child health. More than half of all individuals who experience homelessness in the United States are children and on any given night, more than 100,000 children are homeless. This is the equivalent of 1,400 school buses full of children, covering 12 miles when lined up end-to-end.

Again and again, research has showed us that children who are homeless or experience evictions are more likely to have:

- Developmental delays and academic decline
- Asthma exacerbations, ear infections, upper respiratory infections
- Increased risk of infectious diseases, including COVID-19
- Dental and vision problems
- Mental health problems
- Accidental and non-accidental injuries
- Decreased primary care use but increased emergency department use
- Increased risk of heart and lung disease in adulthood
- Decreased life expectancy

By passing these bills, we are working towards more stable housing for Connecticut children. We are working to eliminate the school buses of children who are homeless overnight. Most importantly, we are working to improve child health.

Thank you for using your position on the Housing Committee and for your commitment to child health. Please SUPPORT HB 6531 and HB 6528.

Thank you,

Shannon O'Malley, MD FAAP

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Resources:

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Council on Community Pediatrics. Providing care for children and adolescents facing homelessness and housing insecurity. *Pediatrics*. 2013 Jun;131(6):1206-10. doi: 10.1542/peds.2013-0645. Epub 2013 May 27. PMID: 23713108.

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Kennedy MC, Kerr T, McNeil R, Parashar S, Montaner J, Wood E, Milloy MJ. Residential Eviction and Risk of Detectable Plasma HIV-1 RNA Viral Load Among HIV-Positive People Who Use Drugs. *AIDS Behav*. 2017 Mar;21(3):678-687. doi: 10.1007/s10461-016-1315-z. PMID: 26906022; PMCID: PMC4995155.

Leifheit KM, Schwartz GL, Pollack CE, Black MM, Edin KJ, Althoff KN, Jennings JM. Eviction in early childhood and neighborhood poverty, food security, and obesity in later childhood and adolescence: Evidence from a longitudinal birth cohort. *SSM Popul Health*. 2020 Apr 4;11:100575. doi: 10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100575. PMID: 32322657; PMCID: PMC7171520.