

## **6531 – An Act Concerning The Right to Counsel in Eviction Proceedings**

### **OPPOSE AS WRITTEN**

To the Honorable Legislators of Connecticut and those serving on the Housing Committee:

My name is Eric Rogers and I am a member of CT Association of Real Estate Investors, CT Property Owners Alliance and CT Coalition of Property Owners. I have owned and operated several units in central Connecticut for more than a decade.

#### **I provide the following testimony:**

This bill fails to recognize that that most (85% or more) evictions are a result of non-payment of rent. While I can appreciate providing free and/or subsidized legal advice to residents, for the vast majority of evictions, the resident has failed to pay rent. These evictions can be prevented simply by the tenant paying their rent, an agreement which would have been made very clear during lease signing. Non-payment cases are not overly complicated; 90%+ get resolved through mediation and the results recorded via stipulation. This is done in front of a Housing Mediator; these cases do not go in front of a judge.

Most landlords make multiple attempts to communicate with their tenants when the rent is not paid, and attempt to resolve the situation outside of an eviction. Evictions are painful for both the tenant and the landlord. The landlord has already suffered months of lost rental income; proceeding with an eviction presents additional time and cost. This bill will also lengthen eviction cases, as legal counsel is arranged, during a situation where Housing Courts are already over loaded with past cases not seen during the pandemic.

Funding legal counsel is much better spent on rental assistance – this will go directly to the residents that need help paying rent and bills.

In summary, while this bill sounds promising, please consider the downstream impacts it will have on tax payer dollars, summary process delays vs. desired outcome. The focus of these efforts should be on educational workshops for residents, with topics such as financial education, wise spending decisions, resumes, preparing for job openings, etc.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eric Rogers  
CCOPO