

# Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6433

AN ACT CONCERNING INSPECTIONS OF RENTAL PROPERTY PRIOR TO OCCUPANCY OR TERMINATION, LATE RENTAL PAYMENTS AND

**Title:** DESIGNATION OF A RENTAL HOUSING OMBUDSMAN.

**Vote Date:** 3/9/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/18/2021

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Rep. Geraldo Reyes, District 75

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill is necessary to provide housing stability and rent protection for tenants by permitting tenants to request an inspection of rental property prior to occupancy and after notice of termination of a tenancy. This would help prevent disputes regarding the condition of the unit at the beginning and end of the tenancy. This bill would also cap late fees for rental payments.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno of DOH- **Does not support Section 4** which states that the department will establish a Rental Housing Ombudsman because complaints of this kind are currently and correctly within the jurisdiction of the local public health and housing code enforcement departments. Further, the information required to be collected, analyzed and disseminated are not within the current capabilities of the Department. Execution of this section would require a significant increase in both staff and financial resources

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Executive Director of the Connecticut Legal Rights Project Kathleen Flaherty- **Supports** this bill because it protects the rights of both tenants and property owners when it comes to the conditions of a rented dwelling unit. The organization believes the limitation on late fees is reasonable and that having someone within the DOH to serve as a rental-housing ombudsman represents an opportunity to resolve disputes early.

Policy Director of Partnership For Strong Communities Sean Ghio- **Supports** this bill because by creating a Rental Housing Ombudsman it will assist in protecting tenants rights.

Raphael Podolsky of Connecticut Legal Services Advancing Justice- **Supports** this bill because it will prevent unreasonable late fees, will minimize disputes about the condition of a housing unit and create a statewide source to solve disputes between landlords and tenants.

Director of Fairfield County's Center For Housing Opportunity Christie Stewart- **Supports** this bill because it will support tenants housing rights by adding a Rental Housing Ombudsman.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

The following do not support this bill because the creation of a Rental Housing Ombudsman would be government intrusion and expensive and the late fee cap is too small

Adam Bonoff  
Trevor Dorian  
Sam Eddinger-  
Robert Jackson  
Paul Januszewski  
Susan Keller Burt  
Xiong Mo  
Carlos Mouta  
Ann Marie Puleo  
Tara Ramlal  
Bo Yang  
Lin Yang  
James Sun  
Terry Waller

President of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners John Souza- **Opposes** this bill because capping late fees and requiring inspections on demand will add more complexity and costs to the rental housing system. Additionally a state position to act as housing Ombudsman is not necessary as the housing courts and local building departments are already equipped to handle landlord /tenant matter.

Elizabeth Sulik of CONN NAHRO- **Opposes Section 3** of this bill because the cap on late fees is too small and will be a detriment to the landlord.

President of Hartford Landlord Association Helen Nixon- **Opposes** this bill because rental properties are already inspected regularly.

CT Realtors- do not support this bill because It is not reasonable or feasible that landlords and tenants be mandated to coordinate in-person inspections of properties prior to and at the termination of rentals. They believe that the cap on late fees is extremely low.

**Reported by: Eddie Aledia**

**Date: 3/19/21**

