

Public Hearing Testimony
Judiciary Committee
Friday, March 3, 2006
Janet Auster

Good Afternoon Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee. I am Janet Auster, an advocate of Advocacy Unlimited (AU). I am here to vehemently oppose SB 361: An Act Concerning Possessions and Personal Effects of Tenants Evicted from Residential Property.

If this bill is passed, tenants will lose all of their possessions. They will be left with nothing. They will lose everything.

The involvement of the town is absolutely necessary. There has to be a neutral party, or else the tenant can not get their property.

There has to be a redemption period. There has to be time for the tenants to redeem their property.

Letting the landlord keep the property is not equitable.

As I speak, the words that I hear myself saying exactly describe me thirty-five years ago up until about 1994. I was evicted again and again for leaving my apartment messy and disorganized. I had low self-esteem and deemed myself a failure because I had to either go into the hospital or a group home. I moved from California to the Institute of Living in Hartford and when I was discharged, I still couldn't keep my apartment. I lost thousands of dollars worth of clothing and furniture, and my beloved dolls and stuffed animals.

When I moved into Shepherd Park around 1994, I was told and threatened that if I didn't take care of my apartment better, I would be evicted again. Then finally I got a housekeeper, which is now paid for by the state. The resentment that I feel from other people for getting a housekeeper is a very challenging situation. But regardless of what people think of me, my apartment looks better. I am able to clean it when the housekeeper is not there, and I was never evicted from Shepherd Park.

It is essential that if someone is evicted, that provisions have to be provided so they can keep their property and can live independently.

It is absolutely necessary to vote no for S.B. 361. Otherwise people who lose their valuable property, will have to start over and over again regardless of their background or education, and will not be able to make as much progress in their therapy and self-growth if they lose over and over again their estate and possessions. Your compassion is all we have to see us through this difficult aspect of our journey.

Thank you for your attention. I would be glad to answer any questions.