

Testimony of Edward Sanady, March 14, 2007
CGA, Judiciary Committee Hearing

- Good afternoon. My Name is Edward Sanady. I have worked for the Town of West Hartford for the past 20 years. I have come before this committee today to speak in opposition of Committee Bill No. 591 - AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONAL PROPERTY OF EVICTED TENANTS
- In my job one of the roles I serve in is as the Town's Fair Housing Officer
- This includes counseling, mediation and educational services to landlords and to tenants with respect to their rights and their responsibilities toward one another
- In carrying out this function I take great care to behave impartially towards the issues and concerns facing West Hartford's landlord and tenant communities
- In my capacity as West Hartford's Fair Housing Officer one specific responsibility I have as is to respond to notices from State Marshals when an eviction is to be carried out in our Town
- When this occurs I work actively to engage the tenant so as to be sure they understand the reality of their circumstances and to see if there is something I can do to assist them at this difficult time
- Frequently this might include helping the tenant with moving out on their own prior to the scheduled date of eviction; helping pay for a moving truck, a storage room, a security deposit on a new apartment, etc.
- Other times I have been successful in helping tenants pool together resources to pay off sufficient amounts of back rent that they can work out an agreement with their landlord to stay in the apt.
- When evictions occur in West Hartford the Town's activity does not end when the items are moved to storage
- I work actively with the displaced tenants in helping them to secure either temporary or long-term housing
- I also work with them to help them recover their belongings
- The Town is required by statute to hold onto these belongings for fifteen days. In West Hartford we hold them for as long as possible, depending on the availability of storage space; sometimes a tenant recovers their property nearly one year later and is able to rebuild their lives
- The proposed policy change would have the effect of removing fiduciary responsibility over the property of a displaced tenant from a government agency and placing that responsibility with a private citizen, a citizen who is likely aggrieved by the past behavior of that tenant

