



CITY OF DANBURY

HEALTH, HOUSING & WELFARE DEPARTMENT
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3/13/07

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Please note that on Wednesday March 15, 2007, the following items will be discussed:

SUBJECT MATTER: Miscellaneous bills

S.B. No. 591 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONAL PROPERTY OF
EVICTED TENANTS. (JUD)

S.B. No. 823 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOVERY OF MUNICIPAL
EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE REMOVAL, STORAGE AND SALE OF
UNCLAIMED POSSESSIONS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS OF EVICTED
TENANTS. (JUD)

I would like to submit my testimony on behalf of my community and all municipalities that perform multiple evictions throughout the year. Feel free to distribute to all the members of the Committee as well, for I cannot get the 55 copies requested by the Judiciary Office so that every member can have a copy on Wednesday.

Since the Eviction Program for the City of Danbury has come under my direction last year it has come to my attention that this process can be improved by making the responsibility the property owner / landlord of the unit, rental or building.

The current effect on municipal staff is great due to:

1. the short notice in which we are notified and have to get personnel to the site to fulfill current legislative responsibilities;
2. the use of municipal staff and vehicles for moving, documenting and handling private property,
3. the lack of funding available to pay for the municipal service provided, and
4. the general environment during an eviction is an emotionally heavy and sad atmosphere and places our employees into potentially dangerous situations.

I have been provided with many examples by our Superintendent of Public Utilities that prove how dangerous the situation can be during an eviction. Some examples are growling and unfriendly dogs that bite and intimidate City employees, injuries that occur during the move usually up and down stairs with their arms full of other people's

Medical Outreach 797-4567
Eviction Prevention 797-4565
Information-Referral 797-4569

Dial 2-1-1 for all
Connecticut Services!

Emergency Shelter 796-1661
Em. Shelter Fax 796-1660
Administration 796-1504

possessions, unfriendly and angry tenants that do not want anyone touching or moving their possessions and a combination of all the above that lead to injuries to our employees while carrying out the current unfunded legislative mandates.

Speaking directly to current municipal costs, the existing program last year spent roughly \$70,000 to provide these services. The current auction proceeds for property left by evicted tenants provide the City with less than 4% compensation of the amount spent on conducting the existing program. This is a direct cost and a large loss of valuable City resources that can be directed to our existing social service programs that help our other residents and tax payers.

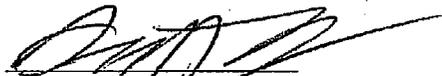
In addition to these issues, the scheduling of these evictions are based on timeframes that do not help the local municipality conduct our daily duties. Examples, many times 5 to 7 evictions are scheduled per month, when only 2 – 4 are actually conducted. This is due to facts and issues outside of the municipality's control (such as weather, last minute agreements between tenants and landlords, legal issues, etc...).

So, my employees work with the highway department (3 to 5 with each eviction) constantly have to keep our time frames open to accommodate a job function that is not a primary job function for any one Department. These tasks can interfere with previously scheduled work and appointments if the State Marshall wants to perform an eviction as soon as possible. We always work with them, but sometimes that legal time frames are primary and force us to put our other work second due to this unfunded mandate.

It would be much easier for the landlord and property owner to have full control over the items on the property at the time of eviction. For they receive the benefits of the rent, security deposits and the time frames needed to prepare for the eviction and process the tenants possessions properly.

In closing, for the reasons mentioned above I fully support "Bill 591 with a Statement of Purpose: To eliminate unnecessary storage expenses for municipalities' by requiring landlords to take possession of unclaimed personal property of evicted tenants." Also, any bill that reduced the municipality's exposure and cost for performing these services until all previous eviction cases are completed I would support as well.

Sincerely,



Scott LeRoy MPH, MS

Director of Health, Housing & Welfare