



330 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860.722.9922 Fax: 860.541.6484

Testimony for Committee Bill 591
AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONAL PROPERTY OF EVICTED TENANTS.

The Connecticut Apartment Association (CTAA), the state chapter of the National Apartment Association, represents over 22,000 units, the largest number of apartments represented by any association in the state. CTAA members consist of the states leading firms in the multifamily rental housing industry. The association's mission is to provide quality rental housing to residents of Connecticut. Our parent organization, the National Apartment Association, represents more than 6 million apartment homes throughout the United States and Canada. The CTAA **strongly supports Committee Bill 591** because it relieves unnecessary financial burdens for landlords and municipalities and makes tenants responsible for taking care of their own property.

As it stands, landlords in the state of Connecticut suffer prohibitively high costs in evicting tenants. First off, since the eviction process in the state is a relatively lengthy process, taking up to three months on average, landlords lose up to three months rent on each eviction. Secondly, landlords bear the burden of the legal costs associated with an eviction. Thirdly, landlords must cover the costs of repairing and cleaning an apartment often left in poor condition by evicted tenants. Fourth, landlords must reimburse state marshals for serving notices and inventorying any leftover property of evicted tenants. The fifth cost a landlord suffers is for hiring movers to transfer evicted tenants' possessions to the curbside or municipal storage facilities.

Importantly, two-, three- and/or four-family dwellings, which constitute a large portion of the available affordable rental housing in the state, are typically owned by small landlords who are easily overwhelmed by the financial burden from evictions. A loss of three months' rent and the other associated eviction costs can be enough to put a small landlord out of business. Accordingly, smaller landlords charge more rent than they otherwise might in order to have extra funds set aside to deal with potential evictions.

Upon an eviction, outgoing residents often leave belongings in apartments such as unwanted furnishings, clothing, appliances and other such articles. By state law, landlords must pay a marshal to inventory such leftovers and then hire movers to place them by the curbside at which point such property becomes the municipalities' responsibility. Municipalities then must store the items for at least thirty days, during which time the evicted resident can reclaim them, and then auction off or discard the property. Rarely is any money recouped since the vast majority of articles left behind are worthless. Municipalities end up spending tens, and sometimes hundreds, of thousands of dollars a year on such storage activity.

Passage of Committee Bill 591 will help relieve landlords and municipalities of the unnecessary costs and liability associated with inventorying, moving and storing belongings left behind by evicted tenants. Upon execution of an eviction, whatever articles are left in an apartment will be inventoried by the landlord and state marshal and stored for fifteen days potentially onsite at the

property. The tenant can then regain their possessions within fifteen days by paying the storage costs associated with their possessions. If the property is not claimed within fifteen days then it is considered abandoned property such that landlords can discard worthless items and sell off anything of potential value to recoup lost rent and eviction costs. In this way, residents under eviction will be forced to take responsibility for removing valued belongings before execution.

The bottom line is that Raised Bill 591 provides Connecticut legislators an opportunity to increase affordable housing in the state and free up municipal funds better spent elsewhere. By removing the burden of moving items left behind by evicted residents, landlords' eviction costs will be reduced, particularly in the case of smaller landlords, and, given market forces, this ultimately means reduced residential rental rates, especially for two- to four-family properties which make up a large portion of the state's affordable housing. Furthermore, since municipalities no longer will have to spend tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars storing property left behind by evicted residents, money can be diverted to more important civic functions.

Therefore, the CTAA *strongly supports* Committee Bill 591!

Jay Adams
CTAA Legislative Committee Chairperson