



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

Testimony for Raised Bill:

5246 - AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRIBUTION OF THE MARRIAGE LICENSE SURCHARGE AND CHANGES TO THE LANDLORD AND TENANT STATUTES TO BENEFIT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

The Connecticut Apartment Association (CTAA) is the state chapter of the National Apartment Association and represents over 26,000 units, the largest number of apartments represented by any association in the state. CTAA members consist of the state's 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 **Connecticut Apartment Association (CTAA)** supports legislation helping victims of domestic violence however we have concerns with Raised Bill 5246 - An Act Concerning Distribution of the Marriage License Surcharge and Changes to the Landlord and Tenant Statutes to Benefit Victims of Domestic Violence.

Our Association's first concern is that the proposed Bill unfairly singles out and sets requirements for landlords and renters. Domestic violence occurs in all sectors of the community and not just with renters' therefore why does the Bill not make the same requirements for property owners that have mortgages and are victims of domestic violence? If the legislature's intent is to allow victims to move to a new address for safety purposes then mortgage companies should be held to these same proposed mortgage termination requirements as landlords are to lease terminations in this Bill.

The second concern our association has with the proposed language is that documentation of proof of domestic violence is too loosely defined as "any other document that establishes that the tenant is a victim of family violence". Documentation should be restricted to legal documents such as police reports and restraining or protective orders in an effort to ensure that tenants are not using this as an excuse to terminate a lease or to defer rent for a month as the bill would also allow.

The third concern our association has with the proposed language is that it would allow for lease termination with five (5) days written notice to the property owner. This is a hardship that not many property owners can bear especially in these tough economic conditions. The property would have to be cleaned and repaired and then listed. It could take two to three months to re-rent the apartment which means a loss of up to three months rent. The Bill also stipulates that the property owner must return half of the tenant's security deposit, therefore no matter what condition the apartment is left in the tenant will still receive half of their security deposit back, creating a potential for more economic loss for property owners beyond the three months rent they have already lost. Our association would suggest that the property owner be given 30 days written notice and that return of security deposit be based solely on the condition of the dwelling unit.

The fourth concern CTAA has with the proposed language is that the Bill would allow for a one-time deferral of one month's rent, with five days written notice, if the tenant chose to remain in the dwelling unit but was a victim of domestic violence. The property owner would then be required to allow the tenant to take up to six months to pay this deferred rent. The documentation is again loosely defined in this Section of the Bill as "any other document that establishes that the tenant is a victim of family violence". Documentation should be restricted to legal documents such as police reports and restraining or protective

orders in an effort to ensure that tenants are not using this as an excuse to defer rent for a month. This Also again puts an economic hardship on the property owner, who has budgeted to receive twelve months rent.

In conclusion, CTAA sympathizes with victims of domestic violence but has concerns with Raised Bill 5246 - An Act Concerning Distribution of the Marriage License Surcharge and Changes to the Landlord and Tenant Statutes to Benefit Victims of Domestic Violence, as documented above.

Sincerely,
Ann Emerson, CTAA President