



Connecticut Association of Housing Code Enforcement Officials, Inc.

TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

PRESENTED BY:
AMY LEHANEY, PRESIDENT, 203 256-3020

IN SUPPORT OF:
SENATE BILL NO. 957 - AN ACT CONCERNING NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION

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MARCH 1, 2011

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The Connecticut Association of Housing Code Enforcement Officials (CAHCEO) was founded in 1971 by housing code enforcement officials from cities and towns throughout Connecticut. In 1997 CAHCEO became a chapter of the Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA). In 2003 BOCA, the International Conference of Building Officials and the Southern Building Code Congress International merged into the International Code Council forming the world's largest and most comprehensive model code and building safety organization. CAHCEO provides continued education and training for code officials along with networking opportunities and housing related advocacy and legislation. Today, CAHCEO has over 100 members representing 28 municipalities throughout the state of Connecticut. Today's members include not only housing code enforcement officials but building, zoning and health officials as well.

CAHCEO supports Senate Bill No. 957, An Act Concerning Neighborhood Protection, in its entirety. This legislation would aid housing code enforcement officials when properties owned by financial institutions do not meet minimum housing code requirements. Housing code enforcement officials often deal with complaints concerning no heat or other life safety issues. Life safety issues, like no heat, need to be corrected immediately. In the case of a property owned by a financial institution it is often impossible because of the lack of contact information. With no local agent listed on the land records we often have to go through the directory at the financial institution to locate a person familiar with that property. It often takes the financial institution time to find and contact an agent within the area that can go to the property and correct the violation. In some situations leaving violations uncorrected places at risk the lives of the tenants, municipal officials and first responders. If the financial institutions do not remedy the situation the municipalities are required to relocate the occupants to approved and safe housing. This places an additional financial burden on the municipality at a time when municipalities are facing budget shortfalls. This legislation would allow us to immediately contact an agent for the financial institution and to notify them of the situation, and the corrections that are necessary to remedy it. Also, this legislation, which requires registration when a person commences a foreclosure action, would allow housing code enforcement officials to notify the financial institution if the current owner was not correcting violations or was allowing the property to be maintained in substandard or dangerous conditions.