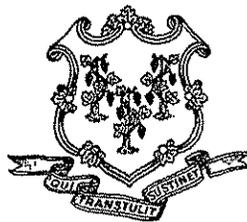


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March 1, 2011

Good morning Senator Gomes, Representative Butler and members of the Housing Committee. I am here to testify in support of SB 734, AN ACT CONCERNING LANDLORD IMPERSONATION which would make landlord impersonation a class D felony.

This matter was originally brought to my attention by a constituent upon researching the issue I discovered that it can be a serious problem. Other states, including California are also considering the possibility of similar legislation.

The difficulties in the housing market which led to increased foreclosures have created an increase in vacant or abandoned properties. This situation can set the stage for landlord impersonation scams. In these situations, the impersonator will advertise a rental (often using sites such as Craig's List) and

request both the security deposit and rent in cash. The prospective tenants, who believe that they have signed a legitimate lease, are scammed out of the rent and deposit money. Often, the tenant becomes aware of the scam when the actual owners (sometimes the bank) arrive on the property. Many of these tenants have no way to secure any redress for this victimization. Creating a felony for landlord impersonation should provide a deterrent to the prospective landlord impersonators. Thank you for hearing this important issue.