

February 25, 2013

**Aging Committee - Public Hearing on Raised Bill No. 6398
AN ACT CONCERNING A SAFE HAVEN FROM EVICTION FOR ELDERLY AND
DISABLED TENANTS.**

Testimony of:

Scott C. Bertrand, Executive Director & CONN-NARO Past President
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1 Pearson Way
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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Aging Committee:

My name is Scott Bertrand and I am the Executive Director of the Enfield Housing Authority. I have been a housing probationer for over 20 years. I am also a Past President of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials more commonly known as CONN-NAHRO.

I Oppose Raised Bill 6398 for several reasons.

First, the current judicial process that takes place prior to an eviction is very lengthy and does not occur until an individual has been given the opportunity to appear before a judge. Ultimately a Superior Court Judge makes the final decision as to if an individual will be evicted.

In all cases, other than serious nuisance and non-payment of rent, public housing residents must be given a pre-termination notice period of at least 21 days in which they may remedy the issue. This must occur before the eviction process can begin. The overall eviction process generally takes a minimum of six to eight weeks. Additionally, almost all cases are sent to mediation prior to a trial thereby allowing an individual yet another opportunity to work toward a solution.

Second, this legislation will create an unfunded mandate due to the additional administrative burden and increased costs such as delayed rent collection and legal fees. The other residents will ultimately pay through the form of higher rent needed cover the higher costs.

Lastly, the proposed legislation singles out public housing and does not offer the same level of protection for the thousands of other elderly and disabled residents living in privately owned rental housing.

As an alternative, I recommend that such information be posted and distributed at the each court location where housing matters are heard. The court clerks could be required to hand out the information when an appearance is filed by the tenant. This system would allow tenants ample time to seek resources that may help to prevent an actual eviction and not place a financial burden on the other low income public housing residents.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott C. Bertrand