

Testimony in Support of HB 6015

An Act Prohibiting the charging of fees for the dispatch of emergency services in response to 911 calls.

Michael W. Soracchi
Christine Soracchi
Milford Residents
New Britain Property Owners

Members of the Public Safety Committee, thank you for raising HB 6015 for a public hearing. As property owners in New Britain, we strongly urge you to vote this bill favorably out of committee.

In its attempt to close a municipal deficit, the city ordinance passed by New Britain's City Council endangers the lives of its residents who are renters. We own an eight unit building at one address. We have had persons with disabilities, families with young children, and older adults rent apartments from us. It is completely plausible that such tenants may need to utilize the services of 911, and perhaps even more than once in a calendar year.

New Britain's ordinance mandates that after ten 911 calls to one address, regardless of the number of units at this address- landlords will be fined \$600 per every 911 call thereafter. As business people, most landlords will prospectively factor in these potential costs in the rental rates for their units. Other landlords might explicitly tell their tenants that if they call 911 – their rent will go up. In the best case scenario -the tenant absorbs the cost of these fines. In the worst case scenario, tenants who are in life threatening situations will not call 911 for fear of being fined, and succumb to their medical emergency. If New Britain's ordinance is allowed to stand, renters in New Britain are at risk of dying unnecessarily. It is a reckless move on the part of New Britain's City Council to balance its budget.

911 calls are a right all residents are entitled to for free. No one should be in a position of hesitating to call 911 because of fear of being charged a fine or having their rent go up. 911 are already paid by a surcharge in our phone bills and police and fire department budgets are already funded with property taxes. New Britain's ordinance discriminates against city residents who are renters.

We applaud Representative Butler for introducing HB 6015 and we urge members of the Public Safety Committee to vote HB 6015 favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Soracchi
Christine Soracchi
Milford, CT