

TESTIMONY OF
THE CONNECTICUT COALITION OF PROPERTY OWNERS
RE: SB 188 AAC MUNICIPAL MANDATE RELIEF

Before the Legislature's Planning & Development Committee
Friday, February 13, 2013
11:00 AM, Room 2B, Legislative Office Building

Good morning. My name is Marshall Collins. I am here today in my capacity as Counsel for the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners. CCOPO is the largest landlord property owner association in Connecticut. CCOPO has chapters in Hartford, Bridgeport, Stamford and Windham and also includes the Connecticut Association of Real Estate Investors. Collectively CCOPO members own approximately 10,000 rental units throughout Connecticut.

CCOPO opposes section 4 of SB 188. CCOPO must strongly oppose any shifting of the burden of storing the possessions of an evicted tenant from one blameless party, the municipalities, to another, the landlord property owner.

Section 4 of SB 188 eliminates a municipality's responsibility to store an evicted tenant's property. Does this shift the cost of storage to the landlord?

If yes, why should the innocent landlord after months of not being paid rent, after being forced to go to court to regain possession of his or her property and after the court has issued judgment saying that the landlord did nothing wrong have to pay to store the guilty tenant's property?

There is no justification for shifting the burden of storage to innocent landlords. The cost of this social service has been placed upon everyone but the guilty party who caused the problem: the evicted tenant.

Please remember that a tenant can be evicted only after a court proceeding in which the tenant has had every legal opportunity to protect their rights.

Unless **Section 4 of SB 188** is deleted it will force an additional cost upon landlords, whether they own multiple buildings or they are a retired couple that own a duplex and are living on a fixed income. At best, this additional cost, along with higher utility bills, higher fuel costs, higher insurance costs, and higher property taxes, will be passed through in the form of higher rents. In other words, the tenants who don't pay their rent would drive up rents for those that do.

Please reject section 4 of SB 188. It is time to stop making innocent landlords, taxpayers and responsible tenants pay to provide free storage to evicted tenants.

This completes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.