

Proposed Bill No. 153
Elm City Communities Testimony
February 23, 2016

Elm City Communities/Housing Authority of the City of New Haven (ECC/HANH) respectfully submits testimony in opposition of Senate Bill No. 153, "*AN ACT CONCERNING SECURITY DEPOSITS FOR AGE-RESTRICTED PUBLIC HOUSING.*"

ECC/HANH is a public housing authority in New Haven, Connecticut that is wholly subsidized by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As one of the first established public housing agencies in Connecticut and the nation, we know the importance of providing safe, decent, and affordable housing to the state's most vulnerable populations. We pride ourselves in our ability to house and provide supportive services for nearly 12,000 New Haven residents even with diminishing resources and a lean team.

Currently, our security deposit is either \$50 or a sum equal to the total payment per month, which is no more than 28.5 percent of the renter's monthly income. On average, our nearly 2,200 low-income public housing tenants have paid a security deposit of \$250. We believe the security deposit fee and rent is both reasonable and responsive to our tenants' income and in line with HUD statutes and regulations.

Ultimately, Proposed Bill No. 153 is a good bill for those public housing agencies and community housing development corporations that do not already adhere to established reasonable and responsive policies. However, for those agencies that already adhere to established reasonable and responsive policies, like ours, Proposed Bill No. 153, if passed, would put an undue burden on an already stressed workforce and an agency that is highly regulated and monitored by HUD. We respectfully request, should the Committee move forward with Proposed bill No. 153, that an amendment be added and include an exception for Connecticut public housing agencies and community housing development corporations that do not receive state dollars for the administration of low-income public housing.

We thank the Housing Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly, particularly Representative Larry Butler, Senator Gary Holder-Winfield, Representative Kim Rose, Senator Catherine Osten, Representative Brenda Kupchick, and Senator Tony Hwang, for their time and consideration of our testimony.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Emily Byrne via email at ebyrne@newhavenhousing.org or via telephone: 203-498-8800, 1024.