

September 20, 2016

Honorable Members of the Program Review Committee

Testimony of Adam Bonoff of the Greater Bridgeport Property Owners Association

Dear Members:

We greatly appreciate the opportunity you have given the landlords of CT in agreeing to review the processes built into the legal practices of Fair Housing litigation in our state.

A few years ago I had the misfortune of being accused of discrimination by a tenant who was upset I evicted her. This young woman made perpetual noise by playing her music at all hours of the day at high volume in a four unit home. She consistently disturbed her neighbors and it was necessary after losing a set of tenants in the floor below and above her to have her removed. As soon as the eviction was completed she filed a complaint with CHRO alleging I discriminated against her because I didn't like her race and her child, none of which was true.

At that point I became aware immediately that I was being just about forced to settle the claim for numerous reasons. The CHRO immediately sent me a "Schedule A" which requested business information related to any other properties I owned or had interest in CT. I needed to provide tenant information, including contact information to CHRO. I was then informed by my attorney that they would turn over my personal business information, and private tenant information to the complainant and her attorney, they would conduct the investigation.

Next I was informed that even if I could prove the entire allegation was a lie and that she was defaming me, I would not be able to counter sue. I could not hold her attorney responsible for any allegations to be true and correct and they would be held harmless. They had nothing to lose by bringing a fraudulent claim only I could lose. All the documents they sent me assured me that if I was not truthful I could be facing additional suits.

Next I learned that if I decided not to settle the allegations I could have to face

the same claims until they got the result they sought.

The law failed me and did not protect me at all as the accused, I was in essence stripped of my rights, sure I could fight if I wanted but it is obvious it would just cost me more the longer it went and proving my innocence was worthless. The only solution was to get out of the situation as quickly as possible and try to settle it quickly to limit the damage.

The numbers these cases are being settled for are huge numbers, \$20k, 30k, 40k and up with many times no admission of guilt. Many honest hard working people are being cheated by this system.

The system is seriously broken, Fair Housing should be fair to everyone involved. It should be about justice and nobody should hold the upper hand in the eyes of the law.

Please make the appropriate changes to the law to make it a level playing field.

thank you,

Adam Bonoff
The Greater Bridgeport Property Owners Association