

Stephanie Johnson
Dear Committee:

As a landlord in the State of Connecticut, I am concerned with the process with which discrimination claims that are being investigated in Connecticut. The process is unfair and unbalanced and I am supporting the CTPOA in their call for a better process. Points of consideration are below.

1. The Standard of Review should be raised so that the Complainant can only request "Reconsideration" (Appeal) just one time - not have the right to appeal an unlimited amount of times driving the defense into making deals to avoid endless litigation costs;

a.) Respondents shall be extended the same right to "Reconsideration" as Complainants;

2. A Complainant must swear under oath that their complaint is true and factual and must also be notarized;

a.) Restore the affidavit language that requires the complaint to make true and factual statements; the same condition required of Respondents;

3. Damages should be limited to actual damages. Lodging housing complaints and asking for monetary damages that bear no rational relation to the injury or to the facts of the situation should not be considered;

a.) Likewise, private attorneys should not be able to use the CHRO forum to bring discrimination cases- they should have to avail themselves of the regular court system like all other cases seeking monetary damages;

b.) Solicitations should not be allowed. Its comparable to an underage minor being allowed to be hired to go into establishments to "sting" sellers of tobacco and alcohol- certainly allowed by the police, who can bring charges, but not allowed by members of the public or for attorneys wherein are seeking monetary gain in the form of "damages".

4. Raise the "Burden of Proof" so that a Complainant must show a Fair Housing violation by a preponderance of the evidence. Currently the standard is "Reasonable Cause" and is too low for a burden of proof as it must be more likely that discrimination occurred rather than less likely;

5. Complaints must be pre-screened by a Merit Assessment Review before Respondents are subjected to the investigative process;

6. Secret tape recordings of conversations are not permitted. Any Complainant having made any secret recording shall be grounds for immediate dismissal of that complaint.

These points are more than fair. Those of us who do not carry out discriminatory policies and practices should not be placed in the precarious position of losing one's income property, pay, or savings due to unjustified complaints. It is nearly impossible as it stands to hold tenants accountable and to compensate for major damages to one's property.

Very sincerely,

Stephanie Johnson